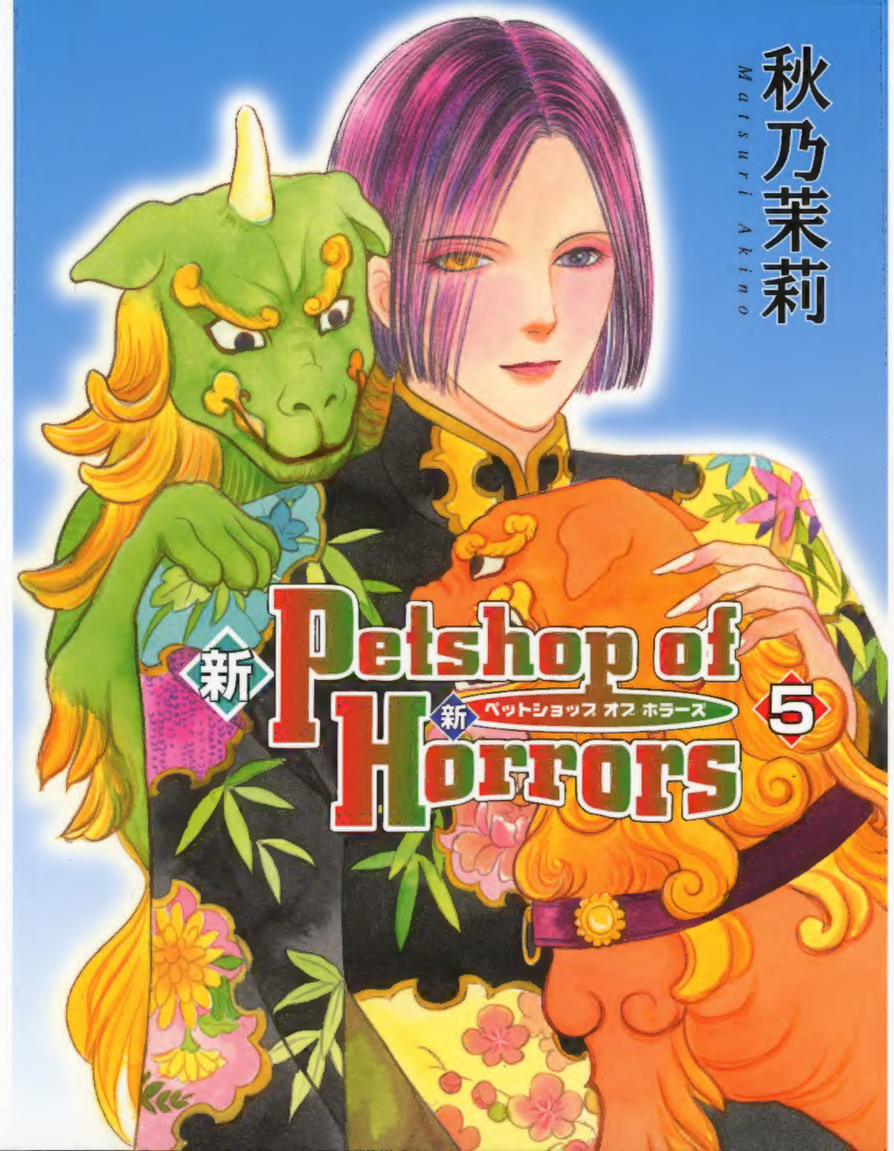
Scans brought to you by Aliera
http://Koneko-scans.blogspot.com

Remember, if you like it, Buy it!

シリーズ100万部突破!!
ホラー・ミステリーの大ヒット作、最新刊!!
新宿・歌舞伎町の片隅にある
妖しいペットショップ……。
妖しいオーナーと、妖しいペットが
あなたのおいでをお待ちしてます!!

カバーデザイン/上田　敬
カバーイラスト/秋乃茉莉



秋乃茉莉
Maturi Akino

新 Petshop of Horrors 5
新 ペットショップ オブ ホラーズ

眠れぬ夜の奇妙な話コミックス
新 Petshop of Horrors 5
新 ペットショップ オブ ホラーズ
秋乃茉莉
ソノラマコミックス

ISBN978-4-02-213108-9
C0979 ¥580E
9784022131089
1920979005808
定価：本体580円 ＋税
朝日新聞社

眠れぬ夜の奇妙な話コミックス（B6判）
《秋乃茉莉の既刊》
新 Petshop of Horrors ①～④

TOKYO

Pet Shop of Horrors

™

Pet Shop Of Horrors: Tokyo Volume 5
Created by Matsuri Akino

Translation - Angela Liu
English Adaptation - Tim Beedle
Retouch and Lettering - Star Print Brokers
Production Artist - Michael Paolilli
Graphic Designer - Louis Csontos

Editor - Alexis Kirsch
Print Production Manager - Lucas Rivera
Managing Editor - Vy Nguyen
Senior Designer - Louis Csontos
Director of Sales & Manufacturing - Allyson De Simone
Associate Publisher - Marco F. Pavia
President and C.O.O. - John Parker
C.E.O. and Chief Creative Officer - Stu Levy

A TOKYOPOP® Manga

TOKYOPOP and are trademarks or registered trademarks of TOKYOPOP Inc.

TOKYOPOP Inc.
5900 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 2000
Los Angeles, CA 90036

E-mail: info@TOKYOPOP.com
Come visit us online at www.TOKYOPOP.com

© 2007 Matsuri Akino. All Rights Reserved. First published in Japan by Asahi Sonorama Ltd.

English text copyright © 2009 TOKYOPOP Inc.

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without written permission from the copyright holders. This manga is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

ISBN: 978-1-4278-1592-7

First TOKYOPOP printing: July 2009
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Printed in the USA

VOLUME 5

BY

MATSURI AKINO

TOKYOPOP®

HAMBURG // LONDON // LOS ANGELES // TOKYO

Contents

Chapter 15 Darwinism 5

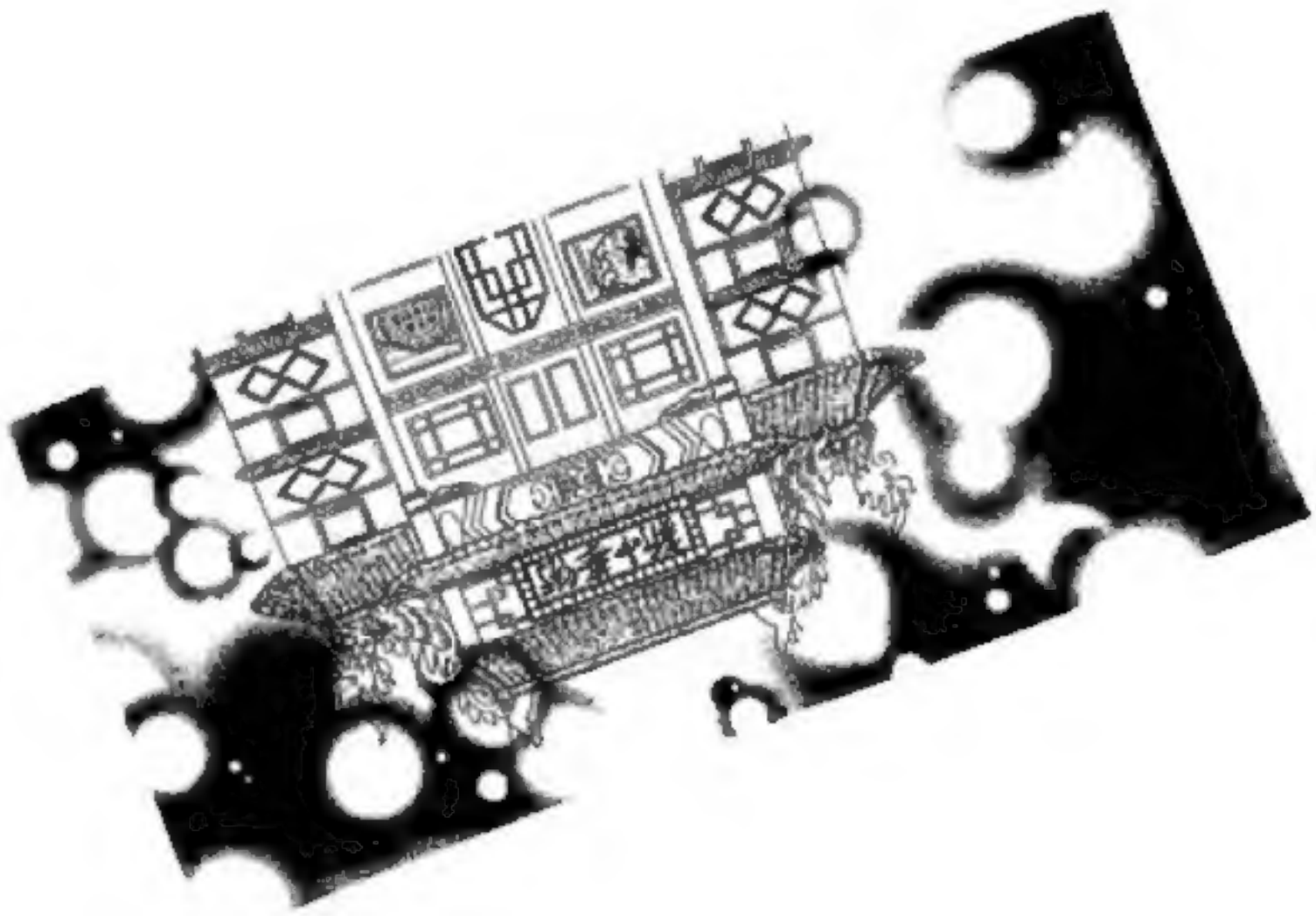
Chapter 16 Dawn 57

Chapter 17 Dining 108

Chapter 18 Dispatch 159

Afterword 210

第15話／Darwinism



SOLD OUT?

AND I'M AFRAID HE'S CLEANED OUT THE OTHER STORES IN THE AREA AS WELL.

HE MUST BE THROWING SOME SORT OF PARTY.

YES, I'M VERY SORRY.

THE PREVIOUS CUSTOMER PURCHASED ALL OF OUR DESSERTS. UNFORTUNATE, REALLY.

THE STORES ON THE ODAKYU AND KEIOU LINES, AS WELL AS THE TAKASHIMAYA STORE, ARE ALL SOLD OUT.

HUH?

NOTE: Odakyu is one of the various railways you can travel on in Japan.

I SUPPOSE IT CAN'T BE HELPED. THERE'S ANOTHER STORE ON THE ODAKYU LINE.

ACTUALLY... I CONTACTED THEM AS WELL.

B-BUT... THAT'S AFTER TEA TIME!

PIRATA

Anjelque

WE'VE ORDERED MORE, BUT OUR NEXT DELIVERY ISN'T UNTIL THIS EVENING.

ALL OF THEM WERE REPORTEDLY VISITED BY STRANGE MEN IN BLACK...

STUDIO ALTA

IT'S NOT JUST THE SMALLER BAKERIES...

THE MAJOR STORES ARE OUT AS WELL.

...WHO BOUGHT OUT ALL OF THE SWEETS.

EVEN THE FRUIT SELLERS HAVE BEEN HIT!

EVERY SINGLE SWEET IN SHINJUKU SEEMS TO HAVE DISAPPEARED!

THE THOUGHT OF NOT BEING ABLE TO EAT SENDS CHILLS DOWN MY SPINE...

COUNT, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!

I SMELL SOMETHING SWEET! IT'S COMING FROM OVER THERE!

COUNT?

SNIFF!

DAMMIT!

THIS HAS TO BE TAIZUU'S DOING!

甘味処

SIGN: Amamisho (a common name for stores that sell traditional Japanese sweets.)

HA HA! IT'S BECAUSE YOUNG ONES LIKE YOU DON'T EVEN GLANCE AT OLD SHOPS THIS DAY AND AGE.

Heh heh... It DOES look a bit run down.

わ餅

さ餅

WELCOME!

I NEVER KNEW THERE WAS A SWEETS SHOP HERE...

NOTE: Domyoji is a type of rice cake.

NOTE: Kintsuba is a Japanese snack made from flour and bean paste.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO EAT THEM HERE? I CAN BRING YOU SOME TEA.

IS THAT ALL RIGHT?!

OOH! WHAT DELICIOUS LOOKING KINTSUBA.

DOMYOJI, TOO.

Aaah!

IT HAS A SIMPLE, YET REFINED SWEETNESS.

COULD THIS BE RED BEAN PASTE FROM TOKACHI, HOKKAIDO?

OH, MY.

I'LL DEFINITELY BE VISITING OFTEN FROM NOW ON.

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'VE HAD SUCH A WONDERFUL PLACE NEARBY ME AND NOT KNOWN OF IT.

ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT PLACES TO SEE IS RIGHT UNDER YOUR OWN NOSE.

I'M VERY THANKFUL FOR THAT, BUT...

I'VE BEEN THINKING OF CLOSING IT DOWN SOON AND RETIRING.

OH... SUCH A SHAME.

THINGS HAVE GOTTEN DIFFICULT LATELY, WHAT WITH ALL THE MODERN STORES THAT HAVE OPENED UP NEARBY.

A SMALL STORE LIKE THIS JUST ISN'T VERY POPULAR, YOU KNOW.

WHAT IS IT?

NO, IT'S...

OOH... THAT'S MY SON'S.

HUH?

THAT LOOKS LIKE A SHORT-CAKE.

YOU SELL WESTERN DESSERTS AS WELL?

I SOMETIMES PUT OUT THE DESSERTS MY SON MAKES AT HOME.

RIGHT NOW HE'S WORKING AS THE PASTRY CHEF IN A FRENCH RESTAURANT IN A HOTEL NEAR THE TRAIN STATION.

A P-PATISSE-- I THINK THAT'S WHAT THEY CALL THEM.

HE WENT ALL THE WAY TO FRANCE TO LEARN HOW TO MAKE WESTERN DESSERTS.

TH...

THIS IS...

CAN I HAVE ONE OF THOSE AS WELL?

YES, OF COURSE.

THIS FLAVOR...

IT REMINDS ME OF LA JE T'AIME NEAR THE CONCORD PLAZA IN PARIS.

TH-THE CON-CORD?!

I TOLD YOU THIS WASN'T FIT FOR SELLING AT THE STORE!

I-I APOLOGIZE. THAT WAS JUST AN EXPERIMENT. I WAS TRYING SOMETHING NEW.

BUT, YOU...

OH, SHI-ZUMA!

MOM?!

THIS IS QUITE DELICIOUS. YOU SHOULD LET YOUR MOTHER SELL IT. IN FACT, YOU SHOULD MAKE IT A SIGNATURE ITEM.

YES... I'VE SPENT QUITE A BIT OF TIME IN FRANCE.

THAT'S THE PLACE. YOU KNOW THE BAKERY I APPRENTICED AT?!

NO, NO, NO. THAT CAKE STILL ISN'T COMPLETE...

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT...

...THE FLAVOR OF THE SPONGE IS A BIT DIFFERENT.

I'M GLAD YOU LIKE IT, BUT IT DOESN'T EVEN COMPARE TO THE QUALITY IN PARIS.

I DON'T MIND TURNING THIS SHOP INTO A WESTERN DESSERT SHOP IF YOU'LL TAKE IT OVER...

THAT'S RIGHT, SHIZUMA!

YOU CAN'T GET EGGS LIKE THAT IN JAPAN. I'VE TRIED ALL KINDS OF EGGS AVAILABLE HERE, BUT IT'S JUST NOT THE SAME.

AT LA JE T'AIME, WE ONLY USED EGGS LAID BY ISA BROWN CHICKENS FROM THE FREE RANGE FARMS NEAR BOURGOGNE.

I KNOW. I FOUND SUITABLE FLOUR AND BUTTER, BUT THE EGGS I'VE BEEN USING ARE TERRIBLE.

.....

I JUST CAN'T MAKE MY IDEAL TASTE A REALITY!!

I EVEN TRIED TO GET A LIVING ISA BROWN, BUT IT WAS TOO DIFFICULT BECAUSE OF THE BIRD FLU SCARE.

IF IT'S EGGS...

...I MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO SOMETHING FOR YOU.

新中華街

DAMMIT!

IN THE END, HE WAS STILL MISSING FOR HALF THE DAY.

I THOUGHT HE WOULD HURRY BACK IF ALL THE BAKERIES WERE COMPLETELY EMPTY.

Taking a Break

HMM?

WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH THIS MOUNTAIN OF SWEETS?

TAIZUU ...

There are some amazing people in this world, Tsugiri.

...though one child suggested Santa Claus as a possibility. Ha ha ha!

That was until the desserts were anonymously donated to preschools and daycare centers in the area. Bakery owners and childcare providers alike are at a loss as to who the good Samaritan was...

Earlier today there was a small uproar in the Shinjuku area over an apparent buyout of all available desserts and sweets from local bakeries.

HE'S AN IDIOT.

GREETINGS.

WELCOME TO COUNT D'S PET SHOP.

THREE MONTHS EARLIER...

MY, JUST LIKE THE RUMORS.

THE ATMOSPHERE HERE IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM A NORMAL PET STORE.

YES. A REGULAR CLIENT OF OURS.

HE TOLD ME THAT THANKS TO A PET HE RECEIVED HERE...

...HE WAS ABLE TO FEND OFF THE LONELINESS OF LOSING HIS WIFE AND LIVING ALONE.

I'M GLAD I COULD BE OF SERVICE.

WERE YOU REFERRED HERE BY SOMEONE?

WOULD YOU LIKE SOME TEA?

THE BAKERY NEARBY HAD THE NICEST LITTLE COOKIES TODAY.

OH, MY...

WHAT KIND OF PET ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

UM, WELL YOU SEE...

IT'S A CUSTOMER FOR COUNT D!

IT'S A CUSTOMER.

WE'VE EVEN VISITED HOSPITALS IN TOKYO FOR FERTILITY TREATMENT.

...AND WE'VE BEEN UNSUCCESSFUL IN PRODUCING A CHILD.

COUNT D, THIS IS RATHER EMBARRASSING, BUT WE'VE BEEN TOGETHER FOR 20 YEARS NOW...

AND WE'VE AGED...

IT COSTS A LOT OF MONEY...

WOW!

THIS REALLY IS QUITE DELICIOUS.

PLEASE, HAVE ANOTHER CUP.

WE'VE DECIDED TO GIVE UP.

...TO GO THAT FAR JUST TO CONTINUE OUR BUSINESS...

WE'VE THOUGHT ABOUT ADOPTING, BUT IT ALSO COSTS MONEY AND...

WITHOUT AN HEIR, WE BELIEVE WE WILL HAVE TO SHUT DOWN OUR BUSINESS...

OUR FAMILY IS FROM THE COUNTRY. WE'VE OWNED A HOT SPRINGS RESORT FOR TEN GENERATIONS.

I SEE.

I'M SURE SHE WILL BE VERY DISAPPOINTED.

SO, WHILE WE KNOW IT'S NO REPLACEMENT FOR A GRANDCHILD, WE THOUGHT WE MIGHT GET HER A CUTE PET.

MY MOTHER, THOUGH... SHE'S BEEN WAITING EAGERLY FOR A GRANDCHILD.

TWEET! TWEET!

IF IT'S A DOG, I WOULD RATHER HAVE ONE THAT ISN'T TOO BIG...

WONDERFUL! IT IS A CAT OR A DOG?

I BELIEVE I HAVE A PET THAT WILL SUIT YOUR NEEDS PERFECTLY.

YOU'RE IN LUCK.

THE CHILD TURNS OUT TO BE A PRINCESS, WHOM THEY MUST GIVE UP AFTER SHE'S GOTTEN OLDER.

YOU KNOW THE STORY?

I DON'T UNDER-STAND.

HERE IN JAPAN, THERE IS A FOLKTALE ABOUT A BAMBOO CUTTER WHO FINDS A BABY GIRL INSIDE A GOLDEN BAMBOO STALK.

RIGHT THIS WAY.

...AND GIVE THIS CHILD A TRY.

PLEASE TAKE THIS AS A BLESSING OF LUCK...

SHIZMA de Paris

Reserved

YES!
RIGHT THIS WAY.

HELLO, SHIZUMA. IT SEEMS LIKE BUSINESS IS GOING WELL FOR YOU.

COUNT?!

AAH... TRULY...
THIS IS THE FLAVOR.

THANKS TO THOSE, I WAS FINALLY ABLE TO REPRODUCE THE GREAT PASTRIES I MADE IN PARIS!

I COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT THE EGGS I RECEIVED FROM YOU, COUNT!

IT SEEMS LIKE YOU WON'T HAVE TO SHUT YOUR STORE DOWN NOW.

I WAS ABLE TO QUIT MY JOB AT THE HOTEL TO WORK HERE FULL-TIME. IT'S BEEN GREAT!

WE WERE DOING ALL RIGHT THROUGH WORD OF MOUTH...

...BUT A WEEK AGO, A GOURMET MAGAZINE PUBLISHED AN ARTICLE ABOUT US AND WE'VE BEEN LIKE THIS EVER SINCE.

...IS RUNNING A STORY ON US NEXT WEEKEND.

THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN OFFERS TO SELL OUR CAKES IN DEPARTMENT STORES. AND THE LOCAL TV CHANNEL...

...WE'RE HOPING TO BUY THE EMPTY LOT NEXT DOOR AND EXPAND.

YES. MORE THAN THAT...

CONGRATU-LATIONS. I'M GLAD TO HEAR IT.

AND THAT'S WHY...

...COUNT...

AH... WELL, THE PROBLEM IS THAT...

...I ONLY HAVE A LIMITED QUANTITY.

IF IT'S A MATTER OF COST, I CAN PAY DOUBLE THE CURRENT AMOUNT...

THOSE EGGS...

IS THERE ANY WAY I CAN GET MORE OF THEM?

...AND WHILE IT'S TRUE THAT THE "LIMITED EDITION" LABEL MAY BE WHAT'S DRAWING THE CUSTOMERS RIGHT NOW...

SHIZUMA-SAN...

THIS SHORTCAKE MAY HAVE MADE YOUR REPUTATION...

BUT... WITHOUT THOSE EGGS...

...THE QUALITY OF MY CAKES WILL DETERIORATE AND ALL OF OUR NEW CUSTOMERS WILL STOP VISITING US.

...BUT THE TASTES OF PEOPLE CHANGE REGULARLY. EVEN IF YOU HAD ENOUGH EGGS TO KEEP MAKING IT, THE CUSTOMERS WOULD EVENTUALLY TIRE OF IT.

PLEASE HAVE CONFIDENCE!

BUT...

YOU GAINED VALUABLE SKILLS IN PARIS...

...BUT YOU SHOULDN'T BE CONSTRAINED BY THEM.

A GREAT CHEF ABSORBS THE RECIPES OF HIS MENTORS, THEN TAKES THEM IN BOLD NEW DIRECTIONS.

YOU KNOW THE FRENCH RECIPES, NOW WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH THEM USING JAPANESE INGREDIENTS? IT IS IMPORTANT TO DEVISE YOUR OWN NEW TWISTS

HMM...

AND THIS IS A NORMAL SHORTCAKE MADE WITH EGGS FROM JAPAN.

THIS IS THE FAMOUS 30-PIECES-A-DAY SHORTCAKE AT SHIZUMA'S BAKERY. THE ONE THAT'S ALL THE RAGE RIGHT NOW.

I THINK THEY BOTH TASTE QUITE GOOD.

AND...?!

I WAS A FOOL FOR ASKING THE TWO OF YOU.

SIGH...

I'M SHOCKED, TAIZUU. TO HEAR SOMETHING INTELLIGENT COME OUT OF YOUR MOUTH...

WHAT DID YOU SAY?!

TAIZUU!

YOU CAN SERVE THEM THE FINEST CUISINE IN THE WORLD...

GET OFF IT, D!

...AND MANY PEOPLE WOULD SWEAR THAT THE TASTE OF THEIR MOTHER'S HOME COOKING IS FAR BETTER.

ISN'T TASTE AN ISSUE OF PREFERENCE?!

HELLO?

WHAT? AN UNSATISFIED CUSTOMER?

I'VE COME TO RETURN THIS TO YOU.

IT'S BEEN A WHILE.

OH, YOU ARE...!

THEN CON-GRATULATIONS ARE IN ORDER!

?

I SEE... THEN...?

YES! JUST AS YOU SAID, MY WIFE HAS BECOME PREGNANT.

YES, IT'S NO LONGER NECESSARY FOR YOU.

AND AS PROMISED, I'VE COME TO RETURN *THIS* CHILD TO YOU.

HUH? OH, YES...

I JUST FEEL THAT IT WILL BE A GIRL.

HA HA!

BUT WE DON'T KNOW YET IF IT WILL BE A BOY OR A GIRL...

I'M SURE THE BABY WILL MAKE A WONDERFUL HEADMISTRESS FOR YOUR RESORT.

I'LL FIND A PET THAT WILL BE PERFECT FOR YOUR FAMILY.

WHEN YOUR CHILD IS BORN AND HAS GOTTEN A LITTLE OLDER, PLEASE COME AGAIN.

D, YOU'RE ACTING SUSPICIOUS AGAIN!

SEE YOU.

ドキ

ドキ

HEY! JUST WHAT DID YOU SELL HIM?

SHOW ME.

WELCOME--

EXCUSE ME. I HAVE A CUSTOMER.

IT IS NO CONCERN OF YOURS.

THE OWNER OF THE BLACK CAT BAR DOWN THE ROAD TOLD ME...

...THAT WE CAN GET INTERESTING PETS HERE.

I APPRECIATE IT.

HELLO.

...BUT I HAVE BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO, SO PLEASE GET THE HELL OUT.

THAT'S THE GAY BAR ON SECOND STREET.

Remember, we went there once.

BLACK CAT BAR?

YOU MEAN THEY'RE LESBI--

LOVELY TALKING TO YOU, TAIZUU...

NOT AT ALL.

THIS WAY, PLEASE. OH, WOULD YOU CARE FOR SOME TEA?

I HAVE SOME DELICIOUS CAKE AS WELL.

WE'RE BOTH WOMEN AND WE *ARE* A COUPLE. IS THAT A PROBLEM?

HA HA HA!

WELL, HE WAS RIGHT.

...I'M JUST NOT COMFORTABLE WITH THE IDEA OF THE CHILD HAVING A STRANGER'S BLOOD MIXED IN.

WE THOUGHT ABOUT USING A SPERM BANK, BUT...

WE JUST WISH THERE WERE SOME WAY WE COULD HAVE A BABY TOGETHER. UNFORTUNATELY, THAT'S CLEARLY NOT POSSIBLE.

THE STATE MAY NOT RECOGNIZE OUR MARRIAGE, BUT OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY DO, AND THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS TO US. SHE KNOWS I'M HER HUSBAND AND I KNOW SHE'S MY WIFE.

I UNDER-STAND.

RIGHT.

TWELVE!!!

USHRA— USHRA—

PERFECT TIMING.

I HAVE A PET THAT IS IDEAL FOR THE BOTH OF YOU.

WHAT COULD IT BE?

...YOU MUST BOTH PROMISE TO PROTECT THIS LITTLE SECRET.

IN EX-CHANGE...

LET ME PRESENT THE TWO OF YOU WITH A MIRACLE.

WHO DOES THAT LITTLE RODENT TAKE ME FOR?!

SHIT!

NOW, NOW. TAIZUU.

THE COUNT IS THE GRANDCHILD OF THE ONE YOUR GRANDFATHER IS INDEBTED TO.

YOU NEED TO PLAY NICE WITH HIM.

I WILL KICK THAT MAN OUT OF NEO CHINATOWN ONE OF THESE DAYS! JUST BECAUSE I HAVEN'T YET DOESN'T MEAN I WON'T DO IT, CHIN! *GODDAMMIT!!*

UNTIL THEN, I'M DETERMINED TO UNDERMINE HIS BUSINESS UNTIL HE CRAWLS TO ME ON HIS HANDS AND KNEES BEGGING ME TO LEAVE HIM ALONE!

CRAWLS?

TCH!

I'LL PLAY NICE WITH THAT SON OF A BITCH WHEN HE LEARNS TO SHOW ME SOME RESPECT!

BUT I'M NOT ONE TO GLOAT, CHIN. NO, THAT'S NOT ME. I'LL JUST KICK HIM AND GO OFF TO DOWN SOME CHAMPAGNE.

HE'LL LOOK AT ME WITH TEARSTAINED EYES, AND THEN I'LL KNOW THAT I'VE WON. I'LL KNOW HE DIDN'T GET THE BETTER OF ME.

THAT COOL DEMEANOR OF HIS MUST BE FRAYED AROUND THE EDGES.

THERE MUST BE SOME KIND OF WAY.

THERE'S GOT TO BE A WAY TO..PEEL IT BACK.

TAIZUU ...

MEDICAL EXAMINATION?!

BUT... THAT'S...

MOST OF THE PEOPLE WORKING HERE DON'T HAVE INSURANCE!

AND THERE ARE A FEW THAT DON'T HAVE WORK VISAS!

ALL WORKERS, INCLUDING PART-TIMERS, MUST HAVE A HEALTH SCREENING!

THAT'S RIGHT!

WE DON'T OFFER ANY HEALTH BENEFITS, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE DON'T WANT YOU TO BE HEALTHY. THEREFORE, WE'VE HIRED SOME OF THE BEST HEALTHCARE PRACTITIONERS THAT MONEY CAN BUY TO CHECK YOU OUT.

おおお

AND I'M PAYING FOR THE WHOLE THING, SO QUIT WHINING LONG ENOUGH TO OPEN UP AND SAY "AAAH!" DOCTOR, YOUR TEAM KNOWS WHAT TO DO!

OH, EXCEPT FOR THAT BLONDE IN THE CENTER THERE. YOU'LL BE GIVING ME ***MY*** EXAM.

NO NEED TO WORRY!

THE DOCTOR AND HIS LOVELY TEAM OF NURSES HAVE ASSURED ME THAT THERE WILL BE NO QUESTIONS ASKED.

A HOORAY FOR THE OWNER!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH, TAIZUU!

HOW WONDER-FUL!

IT'S MY HOPE THAT THIS WILL ENCOURAGE YOU TO MAINTAIN YOUR HEALTH BECAUSE WHEN YOU'RE HEALTHY, THEN YOU'RE A HARD WORKER. AND WHEN YOU'RE A HARD WORKER, WE ALL MAKE MONEY!

WITH ALL THOSE SWEETS YOU EAT, YOU MAY WIND UP WITH GOUT OR DIABETES.

IT'S THE PEOPLE WHO SAY THAT WHO USUALLY WIND UP BEING THE MOST SICK.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING, COUNT?!

N-NO, I AM SAYING THAT I'M--

IT'S BETTER TO FIND IT IN THE EARLY STAGES AND GET TREATMENT.

I...I AM FINE.

MY BODY IS COMPLETELY HEALTHY.

Put this on, please.

NO! STOP!!!

PLEASE PULL YOURSELF TO-GETHER.

COUNT ...

EGH?!

NOT UNLESS THEY WANTED IT TO, AT ANY RATE!

NOW, NOW! A LITTLE HEALTH EXAM NEVER HURT ANYONE!

TAIZUU ...

I DON'T THINK THIS IS GOING TO WORK OUT HOW YOU HOPED.

HA HA HA HA!

THAT'S RIGHT, LADIES! I WANT HIM SCREENED FOR EVERYTHING! PROSTATE CANCER! INTESTINAL WORMS! MAYBE EVEN RUN A SPINAL TAP ON HIM, JUST TO BE SURE!

...AND HOPEFULLY GET TO THE BOTTOM OF WHAT'S GOING ON WITH THAT GUY! I'LL HAVE THOSE NURSES TAKE HIM APART!

IT'LL BE EVEN BET-TER! I GET TO EMBAR-RASS HIM...

UGH...

NO!
NO!
NO!

THERE, THERE. WE'RE ALMOST DONE.

NEXT IS...

BLOOD... TESTS?!

OOH! THE BLOOD TESTS! HEE HEE! OH, THIS PART IS FUN!

I'VE BEEN TOLD I'M REALLY GOOD WITH NEEDLES! HEE HEE!

YOU'LL BE FINE. IT'LL JUST BE A LITTLE PINCH.

.....

.....

OH, ARE YOU AFRAID OF NEEDLES?

UGH...

店物寵

COUNT, ARE YOU OKAY?

NO, MY DEAR. I'M ABOUT AS UN-OKAY AS I CAN BE.

PLEASE PUT UP THE CLOSED SIGN.

I'M GOING TO BED. UGH...

THIS IS SOMETHING I WON'T FORGET. HE'LL PAY FOR THIS!

THAT HORRIBLE, HORRIBLE MAN!

OH, IT'S YOU.

IS HE NOT HERE RIGHT NOW?

UM... I'VE COME TO GET MY USUAL EGGS.

KNOCK!

KNOCK

COUNT?

Sorry for bothering you!

I UNDER-STAND.

THE COUNT ISN'T FEELING WELL, SO HE'S RESTING FOR TODAY.

DOES HE MEAN HERE?

BY THAT ROOM...

WOW!

WHAT IS WITH THIS BACK ROOM?!

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THE EGGS, THEY'RE IN THAT ROOM OVER THERE. I SUGGEST YOU GET THEM YOURSELF.

TWITTER!
TWITTER!
TWITTER!
A BIRD...?
WH-WHICH ROOM IS IT?!
OH... EGGS...
HE HAS SO MANY OF THEM, AFTER ALL.

COUNT.

COUNT!

My stomach still hurts.

Ugh.

WAKE UP!!

IT'S ALREADY NOON.

Uhngh...

YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE IN PEAK HEALTH, HOWEVER.

HUH?

WHERE ARE THE EGGS THAT WERE HERE?

SLAM!!!!

WHERE DO YOU THINK?!

TO THE CAKE SHOP!

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!

COUNT?!

WHOA!

...IT WILL BE A DISASTER!

IF A NORMAL PERSON TAKES A BITE OF A CAKE MADE WITH THOSE EGGS...

ARE YOU GOING TO LEAVE YOUR BUSINESS ALONE AGAIN?!

HOLD ON A SECOND!

A CUSTOMER MADE A MISTAKE AND TOOK THE WRONG BIRD'S EGGS!

THAT'S A PRETTY BIG PROBLEM, D!

IF IT WAS ONLY SOMETHING LIKE THAT, IT WOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM.

WILL THEY GET FOOD POISONING OR SOMETHING?!

EGGS?!

HUH?!

IF IT WAS FOUND THAT THE INGREDIENTS CAME FROM A SHOP IN THE NEO CHINATOWN BUILDING, IT'LL HURT OUR BUSINESS!

...WHAT DID YOU SAY?!

AFTER ALL, WITH THE MONEY AND MANPOWER AT YOUR FINGERTIPS, YOU CAN DO ANYTHING, RIGHT?!

SO WHY DON'T YOU GO AND GET THEM BACK RIGHT NOW!

ARE THE EGGS POISON OR SOMETHING?

EXPLAIN PROPERLY!!

...

DEPENDING ON THE TIME AND SITUATION...

SIGH...

WHEN SHE WAS BEING COURTED, SHE GAVE ALL HER SUITORS AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK TO WIN HER HAND BECAUSE SHE KNEW SHE COULDN'T MARRY THEM.

HER FIFTH SUITOR WAS ASKED TO BRING THE "SEASHELL OF THE SWALLOWS."

SEASHELL?!

IN JAPANESE FOLKLORE...

...THERE'S THE STORY OF PRINCESS KAGUYA. THE PRINCESS WHO WAS LEFT IN THE BAMBOO.

IT IS SAID THAT IF A WOMAN HOLDS THE SEASHELL OF THE SWALLOWS WHILE GIVING BIRTH...

...SHE WILL HAVE A SAFE DELIVERY.

IT IS THE SMALL SHELL THAT THE SWALLOW CARRIES WHILE LAYING HER EGGS.

...BUT THE SWALLOW'S EGGS THEMSELVES THAT HAVE A SPECIAL POWER.

IN REALITY, IT IS NOT THE SHELL...

...AND FELL OFF HIS LADDER TO HIS DEATH.

ACCORDING TO THE STORY, THE SUITOR MISSED GRABBING THE SHELL...

IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY ...

THERE'S A STORY LIKE THAT IN CHINA AS WELL.

WAIT A SECOND ...

A SWALLOW'S EGGS?

A TSUBA-KURAME...

IT IS AS YOU SAY.

THAT'S JUST A FANCY WORD FOR SWALLOW, RIGHT?

IT WAS SAID THAT BECAUSE A VIRGIN SWALLOWED A GOLDEN EGG THAT A TSUBAKURAME HAD LAIN, THE FIRST EMPEROR OF THE YIN DYNASTY...

...WAS BORN INTO THE WORLD. SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

...TO EXPLAIN IMPORTANT PEOPLE AND SAVIORS IN THE PAST QUITE OFTEN. EVERYTHING FROM JESUS CHRIST TO FUCKING DARTH-VADER!

VIRGIN PREGNANCIES HAVE BEEN USED...

HA! HOW STUPID.

IT'S A BEDTIME STORY, COUNT.

THERE IS NO WAY A BIRD'S EGGS ARE GOING TO--

...

THIS CRAZY ASS SHOP...

SO YOU'RE SAYING ...

...THAT ALL THE WOMEN WHO EAT THOSE EGGS WILL BECOME PREGNANT?

YES.

BUT...

YES. IF HEALTHY COUPLES HAVE A CHILD IT SHOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM.

JAPAN'S BIRTHRATE HAS DECREASED SIGNIFICANTLY THIS PAST DECADE. EVERYONE'S WORRIED ABOUT IT. THIS IS JUST WHAT JAPAN NEEDS!

SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM? HA HA! THAT SOUNDS GREAT!

HMPH

WHAT IF A MAN EATS IT? WILL HE GET PREGNANT AS WELL?

...IF A GIRL OF A CHILD OR AN ELDERLY WOMAN ACCIDENTALLY EATS IT...

I hope

NO...I DON'T THINK WE NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THAT.

I'VE NEVER TRIED THAT BEFORE, ACTUALLY...

BUT...

THAT'S IT THEN! THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT!

...I'M SURE QUITE A PANIC WILL OCCUR.

IN OTHER WORDS, THE CHANCES OF A BOY BEING BORN...

...WOULD BE ZERO PERCENT.

WELL, IT WILL BE A CLONE OF THE MOTHER.

...IF A WOMAN IS TO HAVE A CHILD WITHOUT THE SPERM OF A MAN...

...THAT CHILD WILL BE...

I CAN'T LISTEN TO YOUR NONSENSE ANY FURTHER.

TAIZUU!

TAIZUU?!

YOU WON'T GO AND BUY ALL THE CAKES?!

THIS IS SO STUPID.

YOU MEAN THEY WERE REAL DOCTORS?! I DIDN'T KNOW.

I'LL GET THESE TO THE BUSINESS OWNERS RIGHT AWAY.

THE RESULTS OF THE HEALTH SCREENINGS HAVE ARRIVED.

TAIZHU...

TAIZHU...

WHICH ONE IS THE COUNT'S?!

WAIT A SECOND!

HM-HMM.

LET'S SEE. LET'S SEE.

Y-YOU CAN'T. THAT IS AN INFRINGEMENT OF PRIVACY--

YOU REALLY THINK I GIVE A SQUIRREL'S NUTS ABOUT THAT?

TCH. HOW BORING.

HIS BLOOD GLUCOSE LEVELS ARE IN THE AVERAGE RANGE.

検査データ. 2

検査項目	正
CRP	
血沈	1 ～
TPHA	-
STS	-
RF	0 ～ 1.5
HBs抗原	-
HCV抗体	-
HTLV－1	-
HIV	-
血液型	
白血球数	3.5 ～ 8.7
赤血球数	411 ～ 538
ヘモグロビン値	13.3 ～ 17.5
血小板数	7.5 ～ 34

Ah!

B-BUT THIS IS--

TAIZUUU?!

ABOUT TODAY'S CAKE--

SHIZUMA de Paris

SH-SHIZUMA-SAN!

HUFF!

HUFF!

I JUST SOLD OUT A MOMENT AGO!

OOH, COUNT!

YEAH... A BUNCH OF MEN IN BLACK PUSHED THEIR WAY IN...

...AND THEY BOUGHT EVERY LAST CAKE.

WHAT?!!

AS I THOUGHT...

I WONDER IF I SHOULD ISSUE A RECALL THROUGH TV AND RADIO. THERE MAY STILL BE TIME.

...HUH?

HA...
HA
HA...

.....

I...
I
SEE...

ON TOP OF THAT, THEY CHASED DOWN CUSTOMERS WHO HAD ALREADY PURCHASED SLICES...

...AND THEY HALF-THREATENED THEM INTO TAKING A LARGE AMOUNT OF MONEY IN EXCHANGE FOR THE CAKES THEY HAD PURCHASED.

AH
HA
HA...

TH-THAT MAY BE WHAT HAPPENED.

COUNT...

MAYBE WE MADE OTHERS IN OUR BUSINESS JEALOUS BECAUSE OF OUR SUCCESS?

WH-WHAT SHOULD WE DO? I WONDER IF WE'RE BEING TARGETED BY SOME GROUP?

...AND TRY MAKING SOME DESSERTS WITHOUT THE EGGS I GIVE YOU.

YOU SHOULD USE THIS CHANCE TO RETURN TO YOUR ORIGINS...

YOU KNOW WHAT I THINK?

WITH PLEA-SURE.

WILL YOU PLEASE TRY THIS FOR ME?

I'VE ACTUALLY BEEN THINKING ABOUT THAT.

WHEN I WAS A CHILD, THEY WERE MY FAVORITE SNACK.

THEY'RE IN ALL THE JAPANESE DESSERTS THAT MY MOTHER MAKES.

THERE ARE RED BEANS IN THIS.

THIS IS...

SHIZUMA ...

THIS IS YOUR ORIGINAL, SHIZUMA.

SHIZUMA de Pari

FROM PARENT TO CHILD...

...CHANGING EVER SO SLIGHTLY ON THE WAY...

...THE BLOOD LINE IS PASSED DOWN.

店物當

.....

...YOU SAVED ME TODAY.

TAIZUU ...

I DO NOT KNOW WHAT CAUSED YOUR CHANGE OF HEART, BUT...

HUH?

GO TO THE HOSPITAL AGAIN!

TAIZUU?

COUNT...

WHAT?!

I'VE ALREADY HAD QUITE ENOUGH OF THAT, THANK YOU!

LET'S GO TO A PROPER HOSPITAL AND HAVE YOU EXAMINED AGAIN!!

単位	測定値
g/dl	解析不能
g/dl	解析不能
mg/dl	解析不能
mg/dl	解析不能
mg/dl	解析不能
mg/	
g/	
mg/dl	

REMEMBER THE HEALTH SCREENING LAST WEEK?

I WAS CALLED IN FOR ANOTHER CHECK-UP BECAUSE THE RESULTS RETURNED AS BEING "NOT ANALYZABLE" ON EVERYTHING.

YES, AND...?

※再検査を要します

天龍大飯店

DARLING, I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!

WHAT'S WRONG?

THAT'S GREAT, HONEY!

I'M THREE MONTHS PREGNANT! THAT'S WHAT THEY SAID!!

WHEN I HAD MY RE-EXAMINATION ...

WHAT?!

We need to get you to a maternity doctor!

I wonder if there was some sort of mix up the first time around

By the way, my blood tests were completely normal

STORY 15 END

IT WAS ALWAYS IN THE WEE HOURS OF THE NIGHT...

WE'D AWAKE TO THE SOUND OF THE LAMP OIL BEING LICKED.

YOU THERE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

YOU SAAAW MYA?

第16話／Dawn

THAT'S A JAPANESE GHOST STORY?

WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?

IT'S NOT SCARY AT ALL!

TAIZUU, YOUR INSISTENCE THAT WE CAN SAVE MONEY ON AIR CONDI-TIONING...

...BY READING GHOST STORIES AND GETTING CHILLS IS RIDICULOUS.

HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT, COUNT? BY REPLACING AIR CONDITIONING WITH HORROR BOOKS, WE NOT ONLY SAVE MONEY, BUT WE ALSO SAVE THE WORLD. WE'RE BEING GREEN!

YES. I'M VERY SORRY.

Save Electricity

HRRRRR!

SUCH A WASTE.

OUR THEATER IS SET TO PERFORM A SERIES OF CHINESE GHOST STORIES OVER THE SUMMER.

TAIZUU, WE SHOULD GET BACK TO WORK.

THAT GOES FOR YOU TOO, COUNT.

EASY, GUYS.

GET OFF, GET OFF.

MEEW!

DON'T COME BACK.

YOU'RE THE REASON I STOPPED WORKING, TAIZUU.

...BUT MY REAL BUSINESS LIES IN KEEPING THE SHANGHAI MAFIA RESIDING IN KABUKI-CHO HAPPY.

EVERYONE KNOWS THAT I'M THE OWNER OF NEO CHINATOWN...

RAU-SAMA ...

THANK YOU FOR COMING.

HE'S SO YOUNG.

AND YET, HE'S THE HEIR OF A $100 BILLION CONGLOMERATE.

SO THAT'S WOO-FEI RAU.

HE HAS GUTS, HE'S STRONG, AND ON TOP OF THAT, HE'S SKILLFUL.

I HAVE SOME LOVELY NEW GIRLS AT THE SHOP. PERHAPS YOU'D LIKE TO TRY ONE OUT?

TAIZUU, WOULD YOU HAVE SOME SAKE WITH US?

THEN I SHALL BRING THE CAR.

CHIN, I THINK I'LL BE GOING TO A HOTEL TONIGHT.

NICELY HANDLED.

カチ

WOULD YOU LIKE TO RETURN TO NEO CHINATOWN? OR PERHAPS--

WOO-FEI RAU...

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME.

DO I KNOW YOU?

YOU'VE FORGOTTEN ME?

RYUKOU.

WE'VE MET BEFORE...IN SHANGHAI.

I'M RYUKOU RIN.

I'M SORRY, BUT THAT CAN'T BE TRUE...

IF YOU'VE FORGOTTEN, WE CAN JUST MEET AS STRANGERS AGAIN.

...BECAUSE I WOULD *NEVER* FORGET A BEAUTY LIKE YOU.

THEN HOW ABOUT YOU BUY ME A DRINK, STRANGER?

I HAVE NO COMPLAINTS.

BUT...

MY, HOW GOOD YOU ARE WITH WORDS.

...NOT HERE.

LET'S GO SOME-WHERE MORE QUIET.

...

ぐすっ

?!

BLAM!

BLAM!

TAIZUU!

...I'M ALL RIGHT.

EEEEK!

TAIZUU?! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!

THANK GOOD-NESS...

WOO-FEI...

THIS ROOM IS YOURS UNTIL YOU'RE FULLY HEALED.

IF YOU WANT SOMETHING, FEEL FREE TO ASK.

HOW ARE YOU FEELING?

THE BULLETS ONLY GRAZED ME.

BETTER. MUCH BETTER.

PLEASE GET SOME REST.

WAIT.

DO YOU ALWAYS...

...LET THE WOMAN WHO SAVED YOUR LIFE SLEEP BY HERSELF?

新中華街

店物寵

WELL, PLEASE MAKE YOURSELF COMFORT-ABLE.

YES...

I'LL MAKE US SOME TEA. ♡

WOULD YOU CARE FOR SOME COOKIES AS WELL?

ARE YOU HERE ALONE AGAIN?

OH, CHIN-SAN.

CHIN-SAN?!

.....

THIS BUILDING IS SO QUIET WITHOUT THAT NOISY MAN. IT'S NICE.

HEH HEH ...

...AND WHEN I CALL HIS NAME AT THE DOOR, HE DOESN'T RESPOND.

HE WON'T ANSWER HIS CELL PHONE...

I'VE TRIED CHECKING UP ON TAIZUU SEVERAL TIMES.

I BEG OF YOU, COUNT D!

WILL YOU PLEASE COME WITH ME TO THE HOTEL?

I UNDERSTAND YOUR CONCERN, CHIN-SAN, BUT WHATEVER'S HAPPENING IN THAT HOTEL ROOM IS THEIR BUSINESS. IT WOULD BE IMPOLITE TO INTERFERE.

WHAT?

BUT HE'S WITH THE WOMAN WHO SAVED HIM FROM THE GUNSHOTS, RIGHT?

HE'S DATED HOLLYWOOD STARS, SUPERMODELS, EVEN A PRINCESS. WHY, THE TABLOIDS USED TO BE FULL OF NEWS ABOUT HIS ROMANTIC CONQUESTS.

SOMETHING STRANGE IS GOING ON HERE! TAIZUU IS YOUNG, GOOD-LOOKING AND WEALTHY, WITH A KIND HEART AND IMPECCABLE MANNERS. HE'S SOPHISTICATED AND MODERN.

IT'S NOT NATURAL, I TELL YOU!

BUT ...

BUT ...

.....

TAIZUU WOULD NEVER MISS WORK FOR NEARLY A WEEK JUST TO SHACK UP WITH A GIRL HE MET IN A BAR. IT'S JUST NOT HIM!

WOMEN ...

...ARE A DIME A DOZEN FOR HIM, AND HE HAS HIS PICK OF THE BEST IN THE WORLD.

THE MAN WHO TRIED SHOOTING TAIZUU WAS CHINESE.

...THERE'S SOMETHING VERY SUSPI-CIOUS ABOUT THAT WOMAN.

PLUS ...

SUSPI-CIOUS?

FROM CHINA ALONE, YOU FIND GROUPS THAT HAVE BEEN IN JAPAN FOR CENTURIES, SUCH AS THE HUAQIAO AND TRIAD...

...NOT TO MENTION THE FOLKS FROM BEIJING OR TAIWAN...

...AND THEN THERE IS OUR GROUP THAT HAS RISEN FROM SHANGHAI.

歌舞伎町一番街

THE STREETS OF KABUKI-CHO...

...ARE HOME TO NOT ONLY THE JAPANESE YAKUZA...

...BUT CHINESE, KOREAN, AND MANY OTHER FOREIGNERS AS WELL.

...WE'VE MADE A LOT OF ENEMIES.

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT IN DOING THIS...

WE'VE BEEN USING THE ECONOMICS OF THE REGION TO OUR FAVOR, SPREADING OUR TERRITORY THROUGH STRATEGIC PURCHASES AND ACQUISITIONS.

I BELIEVE THAT WOMAN...

...MAY BE AN ASSASSIN HIRED BY A RIVAL GROUP.

4942

……

WOO-FEI...

NNGH...

WAKE UP, WOO-FEI.

WOO-FEI...

DAWN HASN'T EVEN ARRIVED YET.

FOUR?

IN THE EVENING? IN THE MORNING?

WHAT TIME IS IT NOW?

AROUND FOUR O'CLOCK.

OF COURSE.

BUT IT'S STILL TOO EARLY.

THAT'S BAD.

I HAVE TO AT LEAST SHOW MY FACE AT THE NEO CHINATOWN BUILDING TODAY.

STAY HERE A BIT LONGER.

...OKAY?

.....

KNOCK!

KNOCK!

TAIZUU!!

PLEASE WAKE UP!

TAIZUU!

IT'S ME, CHIN.

TAIZUU!

I'M COMING, CHIN.

WAIT A SECOND.

WOO-FEI?

CHIN...

SORRY FOR BOTHERING YOU.

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE?!

COUNT?!

AND AFTER I CAME ALL THIS WAY TO VISIT THE YOUNG LADY WHO SAVED YOUR LIFE.

OH, SUCH UNFRIENDLY WORDS.

YOUR NAME IS RYUKOU-SAN, CORRECT?

MY NAME IS COUNT D. I'M PLEASED TO MEET YOU.

H-HELLO.

YOUR INJURIES SEEM TO BE HEALING QUITE WELL.

UW- OH!

HERE YOU GO, A PRESENT!

Y-YES.

I HOPE YOU'RE EATING WELL. GOOD NUTRITION HELPS RESTORE YOUR STRENGTH.

THAT WAS QUICK.

And what happened to Chin?

WELL, I MUST BE OFF.

HUH?

TAKE CARE!!

4942

©

LAAA!!

HE'S A TENANT IN THE NEO CHINATOWN BUILDING.

HE OWNS A PET SHOP THERE.

HUH?

THAT MAN ...

WHAT IS HE TO YOU?!

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

YOU CAN STAY HERE AS LONG AS YOU WANT.

...?

HIS COMMENT ABOUT EATING WELL... IT ALMOST SOUNDS LIKE HE'S PRESSURING ME TO LEAVE.

YEAH.

REALLY?!

I'M HAPPY, WOO-FEI.

BUT PROMISE ME.

THAT MAN, COUNT D...

NEVER LET HIM INTO THIS ROOM AGAIN.

YEAH...

DID YOU SEE ANYTHING SUSPI-CIOUS?!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

HOW WAS IT?

WELL, YES... I DID NOTICE A FEW THINGS THAT WERE RATHER SUSPICIOUS.

COUNT D!

THEY DIDN'T SMELL LIKE HIS USUAL ONES.

THOSE CIGARETTES...

I KNEW IT!

AND I FOUND OUT...

I CALLED SOME OF OUR SHANGHAI FRIENDS TO ASK ABOUT THAT WOMAN'S BACKGROUND.

A HOSTILE TAKEOVER, IN OTHER WORDS.

EH... WELL, YES...

...ADDED AN UP-AND-COMING MICROCHIP FIRM TO HIS EXPANDING CONGLOMERATE.

...THAT IS YEARS AGO, OUR GREAT MASTER...

LET TAIZUU REAP WHAT HE SOWS.

NO, COUNT! IT'S NOT LIKE THAT!

AND THE REST OF THE FAMILY WENT UNDER-GROUND. NO ONE'S HEARD FROM THEM.

THE COMPANY PRESIDENT COMMITTED SUICIDE.

THEY MUST HAVE HIRED HER! THEY'VE PROBABLY BEEN WAITING FOR YEARS FOR AN OPPORTUNITY LIKE THIS!

COUNT!!

IF WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE, THEN I REGRET INTERFERING AND I WON'T BE DOING IT AGAIN.

4942

NO...I'VE REMEMBERED.

TIME...

IT HAS NO MEANING HERE.

WHAT TIME IS IT NOW?

A BRIGHT AND HOT SUMMER AFTERNOON.

IT WAS ONE OF THOSE OLD COLONIAL MANSIONS. FRENCH, I THINK.

I REMEMBER THE PEONIES WERE IN FULL BLOOM.

...AND WHILE THEY MET, THE CHILDREN WERE PLAYING IN THE GARDEN.

YOU WERE WEARING A WHITE DRESS.

THE PARENTS WERE HAVING A BUSINESS MEETING...

WHO ARE YOU?

...OR DID YOU HAVE PLASTIC SURGERY?

ARE YOU JUST USING HER NAME...

RYUKOU DIDN'T LOOK LIKE YOU.

EITHER WAY, YOU'VE GONE THROUGH A LOT OF TROUBLE...

AH HA HA HA HA!!

HA HA HA HA!

HEH HEH ...

RYUKOU?

...AND MY MOTHER SOON FOLLOWED SUIT.

MY FATHER HANGED HIMSELF...

...AND WAS RAISED IN POVERTY BY MY AUNT.

I WAS SEPARATED FROM MY SIBLINGS...

OH YES, WOO-FEI, I'VE SEEN TROUBLE.

IT STARTED THE DAY I HAD EVERYTHING TAKEN AWAY BY YOUR FATHER!

RECOGNIZE ME NOW?! I'M RYU-IN RIN'S DAUGHTER!!

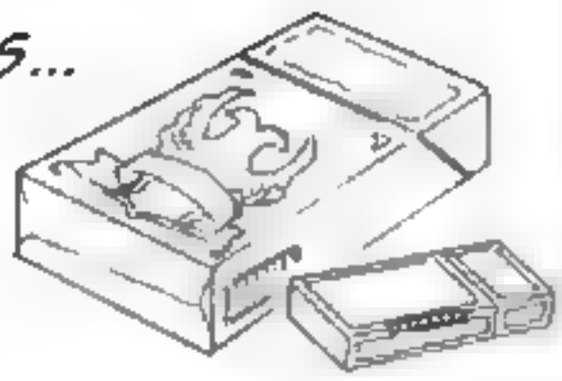
REVENGE AGAINST THE RAU FAMILY!

IT WAS HORRIBLE AT TIMES...

...BUT I LIVED THROUGH IT.

THROUGH THE WORST OF IT, I CLENCHED MY TEETH AND KEPT MY MIND FOCUSED ON ONE THING...

THOSE CIGARETTES...



THEY MUST HAVE BEEN DRUGGED. SOMETHING IN THEM TO DULL THE NERVES...

I CAN'T MOVE MY BODY.

UGH!

I'VE WAITED MY WHOLE LIFE TO SEE THE RAU FAMILY SUFFER LIKE MINE HAS!

WOO-FEI RAU, WHEN I HEARD THAT YOU WERE IN JAPAN...

...I TRAVELED ALL THE WAY HERE.

KNOCK!

KNOCK!

UGH!

PLEASE OPEN THE DOOR!

TAIZUU, IT'S CHIN!

TSK!

IT'S JUST THAT ANNOYING OLD MAN OF YOURS.

FOR GOD'S SAKE, HAVE MERCY AND OPEN THIS DOOR!

BLAM!

Y-YOU ARE--

BLAM!

?!

BLAM!

CHIN?

512

CHIIIIN!!

TAI...

...ZUU...

WHAT DO YOU THINK?! I'M NOT ABOUT TO LET ANYONE GET IN MY WAY NOW!

AFTER ALL, THIS IS FINALLY THE SEVENTH NIGHT.

YOU! WHAT DID YOU--?!

SEVENTH... NIGHT?

WE'LL BE BROUGHT...

...FROM THE DARKNESS TO THE LIGHT.

THAT'S RIGHT. WE'VE BEEN HIDING IN THIS ROOM FOR NEARLY A WEEK.

WHEN THE SEVENTH MORNING SUN ARISES...

AND YOU AND I WILL BECOME A REAL COUPLE IN THE LAND OF THE DEAD.

L-LET ME GO!

Y-YOU'RE SOME SORT OF DEMON!!

WOO-FEI?!

KNOCK!

KNOCK!

AH!

TAIZUU, OPEN THE DOOR PLEASE.

TAIZUU.

TAIZUU.

1942

IF YOU DON'T STOP BEING AN ASS...

...YOU'LL LEAVE ME NO CHOICE BUT TO TEAR DOWN THIS DOOR.

URUU

URUU

COUNT D...!

I WON'T GIVE HIM TO ANYONE!

WOO-FEI IS MINE!

RYUKOU-SAN?!

YOU CAN'T!!

DO NOT COME IN!!

COUNT, DON'T COME IN!!

NOT EVEN YOU, COUNT D!

IF YOU GET IN MY WAY--

...TAIZUU?

AND THEN...

...PLEASE HEAD BACK TO YOUR SHOP. PLEASE DON'T BOTHER US ANYMORE.

.....

CHIN IS THERE, ISN'T HE?!

TAKE HIM TO A HOSPITAL! HE NEEDS HELP!

I UNDER-STAND.

WOO-FEI!

TAIZUU ...

THEN I DO NOT CARE.

YOU MAY DO WHATEVER YOU LIKE.

YOU LOOK HAPPY.

YOU SHOULD HATE ME, SHOULDN'T YOU?

HATE... YOU?

SIGH ...

Y- YOU ...

YOU CHOSE ME, INSTEAD!

THE HORRIBLE MAN THAT SEPARATED OUR FAMILY...

Y...

YES.

I HATED YOU...

I'VE ALWAYS HATED YOU.

YEARS PASSED, AND YET I DIDN'T FORGET FOR EVEN A SINGLE DAY.

I'VE NEVER KNOWN A TIME WHEN HIS MEMORY DIDN'T PUT ME IN A RAGE.

THAT AFTER-NOON UNDER THE SUMMER SUN...

BUT THEN I REMEMBERED. I REMEMBERED MEETING YOU...

YOU *ARE* RYUKOU, AREN'T YOU?

YOU...

I REMEMBER IT TOO. VERY WELL.

SHE COULDN'T BE MORE THAN 12 OR 13...

SHE LOOKS JUST LIKE SHE DID THAT DAY.

IT TOOK ME AWHILE, BUT YEAH...

WOO-FEI...

DO YOU REMEMBER IT, TOO?

DAWN WILL COME SOON.

IT'S GETTING LIGHTER BEHIND THE CURTAINS.

...MY WISH FOR CONTENT-MENT WILL BE FULFILLED.

WITH THIS...

RYU-
KOU?!

FIREFLIES?

?!

MY, MY... YOU REALLY ARE A MAN FOR GHOST STORIES, AREN'T YOU?

SNAP!

COUNT, YOU...

COUNT, I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU!

TAIZUU!

TAIZUU!!

KLATTA!

BEEP BEEP

YOU'RE OKAY?! B-BUT...

...WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR WOUNDS?!

CHIN?!

And what are you crying for?

I'M AFRAID ...

...YOU HAVE THINGS A BIT BACKWARDS, TAIZUU.

HUH?

?!

YOU WERE SHOT BY THE TRIAD A WEEK AGO.

YOU'VE BEEN IN A COMA FOR A WEEK!

THEN THE TIME I SPENT IN THAT ROOM...

WAS IT ALL JUST A DREAM?

ONE WEEK?

TH-THANK GOODNESS YOU'RE OKAY!

TAIZUU!

He's awake! Get the doctor!

SHE'S THE DAUGHTER OF RYU-IN RIN, THE OWNER OF THAT MICROCHIP COMPANY MY FATHER ABSORBED.

SHE WAS SHOT TRYING TO PROTECT ME.

WHAT HAPPENED TO RYUKOU?

RYUKOU?

I MET HER BEFORE GETTING SHOT. SHE SHIELDED ME FROM THE BULLETS!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, TAIZUU.

THERE WAS A WOMAN WITH ME!

...EXCEPT FOR...

YOU WERE WELL ... ALONE WHEN YOU WERE SHOT.

A CAT?!

THERE WAS A CAT WITH YOU. A STRAY.

A STRAY BULLET MUST HAVE HIT IT.

COUNT D TOOK CARE OF THE BODY. POOR THING.

.....

SHE...
HUH...

...BUT SHE DIDN'T MAKE THE JOURNEY ALONE.

SHE'S IN HEAVEN...

IN THAT SUMMER GARDEN...

ALWAYS...

SINCE THE DAY WE MET...

STORY 16 END

第17話／
Dining

店物雑

HEY, COUNT! ♡

I'VE BROUGHT PICO IN.

AGAIN, SERINA-SAN?

YOU COULD ALWAYS RETURN BACK TO YOUR PARENTS' HOME.

WELL, I'M STAYING AT SHOUKO'S PLACE TONIGHT AND HER MOM IS ALLERGIC TO BIRDS.

SHE HAS ASTHMA AND SHE GETS ALL WHEEZY.

DON'T JOKE AROUND!

WHEN SCHOOL'S IN SESSION, I CAN'T REALLY DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT, BUT AS SOON AS SUMMER ROLLS AROUND, I AM OFF LIKE A DIRTY DRESS.

I TOLD YOU WHAT IT'S LIKE. MY MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER ARE CONSTANTLY FIGHTING. MY BROTHER HATES ME AND WON'T TALK TO ME.

MY BOYFRIEND AND MY FRIENDS DON'T MIND ME CRASHING WITH THEM. PICO, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS ANOTHER STORY.

YOU CAN CUT THE TENSION IN THAT HOUSE WITH A DULL BUTTER KNIFE. IT'S AWFUL. I CAN'T STAND IT.

R...

NOT REALLY.

OH! HOLD ON A SEC, COUNT.

I DON'T MIND LOOKING AFTER HIM FOR YOU, BUT...

...DON'T YOU THINK YOUR PARENTS MIGHT BE WORRIED ABOUT YOU?

I KNOW!

YEAH. I'M ALL RIGHT.

OKAY, SEE YOU.

R

P

YEAH, IT'S ME.

I TALK TO HER TWO OR THREE TIMES A DAY. AS LONG AS SHE CAN REACH ME, SHE DOESN'T WORRY.

I SEE ...

SHE SEEMS SATISFIED WITH THAT.

P!

HEH HEH!

THAT WAS MY MOM.

SEE YOU LATER, PICO. YOU BE A GOOD BOY FOR THE COUNT.

P

ANYWAYS, COUNTIE, IT'LL JUST BE A COUPLE DAYS.

I'LL MAKE SURE THE NEXT PLACE I'M STAYING IS BIRD-FRIENDLY AND WILL COME GET HIM THEN.

LATERS!

WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?

I'VE BEEN HERE THE WHOLE TIME.

WHAT IS IT WITH TEENAGERS THESE DAYS?!

AAH!

I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY LET HER WANDER AROUND LIKE THAT!

JAPANESE FAMILIES ARE A COMPLETE JOKE! THAT'S GIRL'S A DELINQUENT...

...BUT HER PARENTS ARE NO BETTER!

NOW, NOW. TAIZUU.

THE KIDS IN SHANGHAI AREN'T ANY DIFFERENT THAN THE ONES IN JAPAN.

MAYBE THEY'RE RIGHT...

...BUT THE FACT THAT THROUGH IT ALL, SHE HASN'T NEGLECTED YOU...

...MEANS THAT SHE'S WORTHY OF BEING YOUR OWNER.

TWEET?

Kabuki-cho 1st Street

COFFEE

WHAT? REALLY?!

HEY, BAD NEWS. MY AUNT CAME BY FOR THE WEEKEND, COMPLETELY UNEXPECTED. YOU CAN'T COME OVER, SERINA.

SEE YOU.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. SERIOUSLY.

YEAH...

NO, IT'S FINE.

HELLO? HI, SHOUKO!

R

R

P

P

OH, SORRY, SERINA.

MY GIRL-FRIEND'S OVER RIGHT NOW. DON'T THINK SHE'D LIKE IT IF YOU JOINED US.

IS IT OKAY IF I STAY OVER TONIGHT?

HELLO, TOMO-HIRO?

IT'S ME.

SIGH...

SHIT!

OKAY, EW. NOT GONNA DO THAT. I COULD ALWAYS CRASH AT A MANGA CAFE ALL NIGHT.

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? LOTS OF OLD MEN AROUND HERE. MAYBE ONE OF THEM WOULD TAKE ME TO A HOTEL IF I HIT ON HIM.

EVERYONE IS EITHER BUSY OR NOT AT HOME.

THIS SUCKS.

UHM...

YOU LOOK EVEN MORE LOST THAN I AM.

YOU WORK AROUND HERE?

THE ONLY PLACES AROUND HERE ARE BARS AND CLUBS. YOU A DANCER?

AND IF SO, IS YOUR PLACE HIRING?

N-NO, THAT'S NOT...

HUH? DO I KNOW YOU?

HELLO.

I OVERHEARD YOU ON THE PHONE. YOU'RE HAVING A PROBLEM FINDING A PLACE TO STAY?

?!

IT'S RIGHT HERE.

I CAN REALLY STAY WITH YOU? YOU SURE?

YES.

"ANGEL'S... HOUSE"?

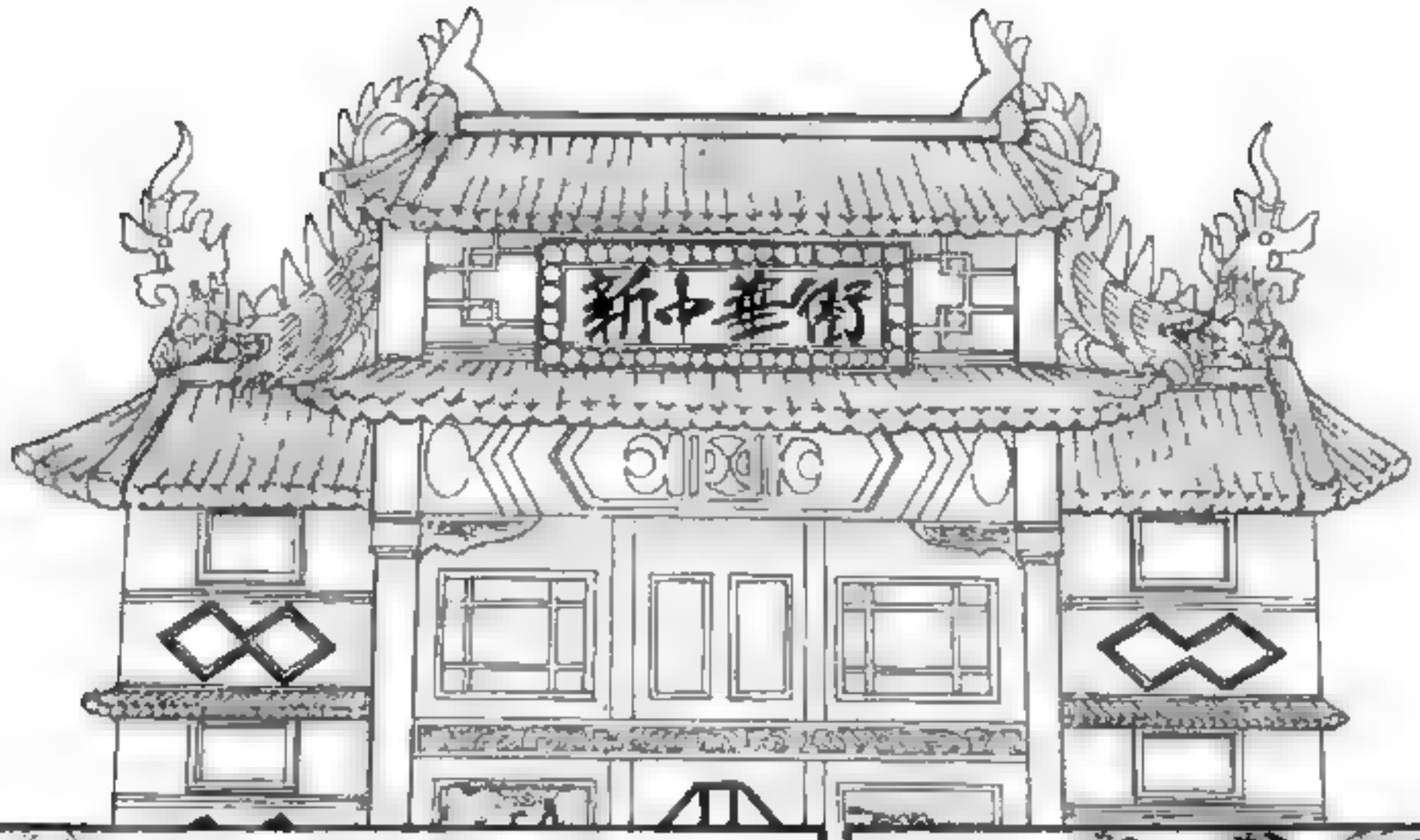
MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME.

THAT'S NOT WHAT I WAS EXPECTING.

THIS PLACE USED TO BE AN EXTENDED LEARNING SCHOOL, BUT IT WENT BANKRUPT. WE'RE RENTING ONE OF THE ROOMS. THEY USED TO TEACH ENGLISH IN IT.

I'M BACK!

WELCOME
HOME!


新中華街

CHIRP!
Not For Sale
YOUR MASTER IS TAKING A LONG TIME, ISN'T SHE?

IT'S BEEN A WEEK...

SHOW SOME RESPECT, D. I'M STILL YOUR LANDLORD.
HELLO, COUNT. I HAVE SOMETHING FOR YOU.

Ah!
OH, IT'S ONLY TAIZUU.

I had them hold the wasabi as well.

DON'T WORRY. IT'S ALL VEGETARIAN. CUCUMBER ROLLS, GOURD STRIPS AND EGG.

OH, BUT--

HERE YOU GO.

WE HAD LUNCH WITH A CLIENT AT A SUSHI SHOP IN GINZA.

THIS IS A GIFT.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

I'LL HAVE SOME RIGHT NOW.

I'm surprised that a restaurant in Ginza had gourd strip rolls!

NOW, NOW.

TCH!

WASTE OF TIME AND MONEY IF YOU ASK ME. ANY MAN WHO DOESN'T EAT MEAT SHOULDN'T HAVE SUSHI.

ほっくん

THA-THUMP

?!

UGH...

COUNT?!

YOU'RE WHITE AS A GHOST, COUNT.

WAS THERE SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE SUSHI?

I-I APOLOGIZE... I'M ALL RIGHT NOW.

HUH ...

.....

...I FELT MY TASTE FOR FLESH RETURNING.

FOR A MOMENT...

THE... GLAZE?

JUST THE EGG. I THINK THEY USE FISH SHAVINGS IN THE GLAZE.

NO, NOT BY CHOICE.

IT'S LIKE AN ALLERGY. MEAT PRODUCES A REACTION IN ME.

HUH. SO YOU'RE NOT JUST A VEGETARIAN BY CHOICE.

I-I DIDN'T NOTICE THAT AT ALL. I'M VERY SORRY.

P-Please have some tea.

NO, NO.

IF YOUR ALLERGY IS THAT SENSITIVE, I'D IMAGINE YOU MUST BE ALWAYS ON YOUR GUARD. YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN YOU MIGHT BITE INTO SOMETHING THAT WAS MADE WITH MEAT.

THAT COULD BE DANGEROUS, COUNT. AVOIDING THE ACTUAL THING IS EASY ENOUGH, BUT WHEN IT'S USED AS A FLAVORING, OFTEN YOU HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING UNTIL YOU TRY IT.

OH MY ...

YOUR PROBLEM IS AN ALLERGY, BUT THERE ARE PLENTY OF PEOPLE WHO DON'T EAT CERTAIN MEATS DUE TO THEIR RELIGION.

WELL, THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT RESTAU-RANTS NEED TO BE CAREFUL.

THAT'S WHY I PREFER SWEETS. THEY'RE SAFE.

EGGS AND MILK ARE FINE.

I READ ABOUT THIS ONE POPULAR RESTAURANT THAT WENT BANKRUPT AFTER A MUSLIM SUED THE OWNER AFTER LEARNING THAT THE MEAL HE'D EATEN THERE HAD BEEN COOKED IN A PORK BASE.

RESTAURANTS ARE STARTING TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS AND LIST WHAT MEATS ARE USED IN THEIR RECIPES RIGHT ON THE MENU.

TAIZUU...

PEOPLE WIN LAWSUITS THESE DAYS OVER THE STUPIDEST THINGS.

THAT'S RIDICULOUS!

HA!

HELLO!

WELCOME TO--

I'VE COME TO TAKE BACK PICO!

GASP!

SERINA-SAN?!

TWEET!

NO.

I THINK THAT YOU LOOK MUCH MORE BEAUTIFUL NOW.

YEAH, A BIT.

WHY? DO I LOOK WEIRD?

A LOT MUST HAVE HAPPENED DURING THE WEEK YOU'VE BEEN GONE. YOU LOOK COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.

DID SOME-THING GOOD HAPPEN?

HEH HEH!

THANKS, COUNTIE! YOU'RE SWEET!

RIGHT! A NEW HOME!

HOME?

HECK, YEAH! I FINALLY FOUND A HOME!

MOST OF THE GIRLS HAVE DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL, A FEW WERE ABUSED, A COUPLE ARE IN TROUBLE WITH THE LAW, BUT THEY'RE ALL REALLY NICE!

...IT'S FULL OF OTHER GIRLS WHO HAVE RUN AWAY FROM HOME.

IT'S CALLED THE "ANGEL'S HOUSE" AND...

SHE TALKS TO US ABOUT OUR WORLD.

EVERYONE CALLS HER "TENYO-SAMA." I DON'T KNOW WHAT HER REAL NAME IS.

AND WE'RE ALL TAKEN CARE OF BY OUR NEW MOTHER.

NOTE: Tenyo means heavenly woman.

TO THINK THAT SIMPLE MEALS WOULD TASTE SO DELICIOUS. BUT THEY DO, COUNTIE!

WE MAKE ALL OF OUR MEALS TOGETHER.

MEALTIME IS SO MUCH NICER THAN IT WAS AT HOME!

ON THE FIRST DAY I MET HER...

...SHE JUST LOOKED IN MY EYES AND SAID, "WELCOME HOME." I JUST MELTED, COUNTIE.

DO YOU THINK I'D HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH SOMETHING STUFFY LIKE THAT? GIVE ME SOME CREDIT, D!

NOT AT ALL.

...IS FAR MORE SOPHISTICATED THAN BOWING TO A CROSS.

TENYO-SAMA IS SPIRITUAL, BUT HER BELIEF...

HEH HEH ...

SERINA-SAN...

THIS "HOME," IS IT RUN BY A CHURCH, OR MAYBE A BUDDHIST TEMPLE?

IF I CONTINUE TO DO GOOD THINGS IN THIS WORLD...

...TENYO-SAMA SAYS THAT I CAN BECOME AN ANGEL WHO HELPS PEOPLE THE SAME WAY SHE DOES IN THE NEXT WORLD.

SHE SAYS THAT EVERYTHING IN OUR WORLD IS A PART OF GOD...

...AND THEREFORE IT'S IMPORTANT TO TREAT THE WORLD AROUND US WITH RESPECT. THE KEY TO HEAVEN IS IN THE THINGS AROUND US.

WE ALSO HELP TAKE CARE OF OUR NEIGHBORS. MOST OF THE PEOPLE IN THE BUILDING ARE ELDERLY, SO WE CLEAN UP THEIR HOMES AND HELP OUT THEIR NURSES.

THE NURSES GET PAID, BUT WE DON'T. IT'S VOLUNTEER WORK.

TAIZUU!

ARE YOU ON CRACK?! THAT WOMAN--

WHAT ARE YOU DOING THERE RIGHT NOW, SERINA-SAN?

THAT SAID, I WANT TO BE ABLE TO EARN MY OWN FOOD AT THE TABLE.

SO I WAS THINKING OF BECOMING A NURSE MYSELF. I WANT TO CONTINUE HELPING PEOPLE, BUT THAT WAY I CAN EARN A LITTLE MONEY DOING IT.

OH, THAT'S THE BEST PART! I'M BEING SCHOOLED THERE! NO MORE SCRATCHY UNIFORMS!

I'M CURIOUS, THOUGH. ARE THERE ANY RULES YOU MUST FOLLOW?

MAYBE ANYTHING THAT YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED TO HAVE?

I SEE. THAT SOUNDS WONDERFUL.

AT FIRST I WAS PISSED. BUT...

...I WAS TOLD THAT I COULD USE THE PHONE AT THE HOUSE ANY TIME I WANTED...

...SO I'M STILL ABLE TO KEEP IN CONTACT WITH MY FAMILY.

RULES? HMM...

WELL, THEY TOOK MY CELL PHONE AWAY.

YES, I KNOW.

PEOPLE ARE ADDICTED TO THEIR CELLS THESE DAYS, BUT WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, ALL WE HAD WERE HOUSE PHONES.

ACTUALLY, NOW I'M GLAD TO NOT HAVE THE CELL. THAT THING WAS A DISTRACTION!

YEAH! I MEAN, AFTER ALL...

...WE'RE GOING TO BE ANGELS, SO EATING THINGS WITH WINGS IS A LITTLE...YOU KNOW?

OH...? JUST BIRD MEAT?

OH, THERE'S ONE OTHER THING. WE CAN'T EAT ANY TYPE OF BIRD.

HA HA... HA.

BEST OF ALL, PETS ARE FINE TOO!

TENYO-SAMA SAID THAT PICO WAS MORE THAN WELCOME.

IN FACT, BIRDS ARE LIKE A SYMBOL FOR THE HOME.

BUT OTHER KINDS OF MEAT LIKE BEEF AND PORK ARE OKAY.

AND EVERYONE STILL SCARFS POPCORN AND CANDY AND DRINKS BEER.

SEE YOU, COUNTIE.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR EVERY-THING!

I HOPE SHE HASN'T BEEN LURED INTO A CULT.

SOUNDS SUSPICIOUS.

.....

GROUP HOMES THAT HELP REFORM CHILDREN WHO DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL OR LOCKED THEMSELVES AWAY...

...ARE PRETTY COMMON IN CITIES.

YOU ASK ME, IT'S ALL A FRONT. PROBABLY RUN BY MOBSTERS WHO TRAFFIC IN YOUNG GIRLS.

WHY MUST YOU ALWAYS THINK OF THE SLEAZIEST POSSIBLE EX-PLANATION?

HMPH.

NO.

WELL, EITHER WAY...

...IT'S NOT ANY OF MY BUSINESS.

HEY, SERINA!

WELCOME HOME.

I'M HOME!

TENYO-SAMA...

THIS IS PICO.

MY, HOW CUTE.

TWEET! TWEET!

LET US PRAY TOGETHER IN HOPE THAT THIS CHILD WILL BE BLESSED.

YES, TENYO-SAMA.

UM... TENYO-SAMA...

WHAT IS IT, SERINA-SAN?

DO YOU REALLY THINK I CAN GO TO HEAVEN?

I...HAVE DONE MANY BAD THINGS. I'VE LIED SO MANY TIMES, I'VE LOST COUNT.

I'VE SHOPLIFTED AND SOLD MYSELF FOR MONEY.

DURING MIDDLE SCHOOL, I WAS KIND OF A BULLY.

HOW CAN A GIRL LIKE ME--?

EVERYONE MAKES MISTAKES, SERINA-SAN. THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT YOU LEARN FROM THEM...

IT'S ALL RIGHT.

REMEMBER, GOD IS ALWAYS WATCHING AFTER YOU.

YOU SHOULD NOT BE JEALOUS OF OTHERS, BUT TRUE TO YOURSELF.

YOU MUST LIVE WITH PRIDE.

...AND USE THAT KNOWL-EDGE TO GROW.

I WILL WORK HARD TO LIVE A GOOD LIFE AND BUILD MYSELF UP.

YES.

I...WILL TRY MY BEST.

...LIKE YOU, TENYO-SAMA.

BECAUSE I WANT TO BE...

CAN I BECOME AN ANGEL AS WELL?

HEY, COUNT.

?

YOU SEE THIS ARTICLE?

"Angel's House" Filled With Mystery

Unusual cult is led by the enigmatic "Tenyo-sama" and made up of teenage girls...

IT STARTED AS A SMALL GROUP. MAYBE SEVEN OR EIGHT GIRLS, TOPS.

BUT NOW THEY'RE NEARLY 50 BELIEVERS STRONG. ALL THE GIRLS BROUGHT THEIR FRIENDS INTO THE CULT, YOU SEE. NO ONE KNOWS WHAT THEIR AGENDA IS...

...BUT THE POLICE WILL BE MOVING IN SOON.

BUT I WAS RIGHT ABOUT IT BEING A CULT. THEY'RE SUSPECTED OF ABUSING STATE WELFARE. THAT'S WHY THEY'RE UNDER INVESTIGATION.

LOOKS LIKE YOUR PROSTITUTION THEORY WAS WRONG, TAIZUU.

THE PRESS SHOULD JUST LEAVE THEM ALONE.

THEY'RE NOT HURTING ANYONE.

TSK! IT'S NOT LIKE THEY'RE DEALING DRUGS OR PLANNING TO BOMB THE GOVERN-MENT.

THEY'RE LIVING OUTSIDE THE NORM. PEOPLE ARE SUSPICIOUS OF THINGS THEY DON'T UNDER-STAND.

WE ARE STANDING IN FRONT OF THE "ANGEL'S HOUSE" BUILDING IN SHINJUKU, TOKYO.

WELL, I'LL BE... ISN'T THAT THEM ON TV RIGHT NOW?

WE'RE HERE WITH A TEAM OF SPECIALISTS WHO CAN HOPEFULLY SHED SOME LIGHT ON THIS STRANGE INCIDENT.

We're not angry! Please come back home!

Tomiko!

YOU CAN HEAR THEM CALLING OUT TO THE GIRLS, BUT AS OF YET, THERE HAS BEEN NO RESPONSE FROM INSIDE.

DOZENS OF PARENTS HAVE GATHERED, WORRIED MOMS AND DADS WHO JUST WANT TO SEE THEIR DAUGHTERS.

THEY SEEM TO HAVE COMBINED ASPECTS OF CHRISTIANITY, SUCH AS THE WINGED ANGEL, WITH THE TENYO GODDESS FROM BUDDHISM.

IT DOESN'T REALLY FIT UNDER ANY OF THE CURRENT RELIGIONS.

THANK YOU ALL FOR BEING HERE. TO START OFF, WHAT RELIGIOUS SECT WOULD "ANGEL'S HOUSE" FALL UNDER?

HOW SERIOUS OF A GROUP IS THIS? IS IT JUST A GROUP OF GIRLS WHO SHARE A FASCINATION WITH ANGELS STARTING A NEW SORT OF CLUB?

WE DON'T KNOW.

THOUGH WE DOUBT THEY'RE IN THERE READING SCIENCE FICTION MANGA.

THE GIRLS AREN'T RUDE. IN FACT, THEY'RE VERY SWEET.

LATELY, THOUGH, THEY'VE BEEN GROW-ING IN NUMBERS SO MUCH.

THERE MUST 40, MAYBE 50, GIRLS IN THAT ONE HOUSE. IT'S TOO MUCH!

IT SEEMED REALLY SUSPICIOUS AT FIRST BECAUSE ALL WE NOTICED WERE YOUNG WOMEN COMING AND GOING FROM THE HOUSE AT ALL HOURS OF THE NIGHT.

EARLIER TODAY WE SPOKE WITH SOME LOCAL RESIDENTS.

...WHO KNOWS WHAT THEIR REAL AGENDA IS. SO FAR, THEY HAVEN'T HURT ANYONE...

...BUT I WOULD LIKE IT IF THEY LEFT THIS TOWN.

...AND DOING ALL SORTS OF VOLUNTEER WORK, BUT...

RIGHT NOW THEY SEEM TO BE HELPING HOMECARE WORKERS...

PERHAPS SHE HEARD HER MOTHER CALLING HER FROM OUTSIDE.

LIVE

WE'RE BACK LIVE OUTSIDE THE "ANGEL'S HOUSE"...

...AND IT APPEARS THAT ONE OF THE FOLLOWERS HAS JUST EMERGED FROM THE BUILDING.

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?! I TOLD YOU THAT I WAS FINE!

BUT WHEN I CALL YOUR CELL PHONE YOU DON'T ANSWER!

YES.

THAT'S YOUR CLIENT, ISN'T IT?

MAMA!

SERINA!

I'LL BE GOING TO SCHOOL FROM HERE.

IT'S ALMOST THE START OF A NEW SEMESTER. PLEASE COME HOME.

I SAID THAT I CANCELED MY CELL PHONE.

IF YOU NEED TO GET A HOLD OF ME, JUST CALL ME AT THE HOUSE.

THAT'S NOT TRUE! TENYO-SAMA IS--

IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE BEING IMPRISONED HERE, MOM.

IT'S MY CHOICE TO BE HERE.

YOU'RE BEING TRICKED BY THIS TENYO WOMAN.

SHE'S USING YOU! CAN'T YOU SEE THAT?

IF SHE'S SO HARMLESS, SHE SHOULD COME OUT AND TALK TO US!

THAT'S RIGHT!

UGH...

WHERE IS SHE? I'D LIKE TO MEET THIS TENYO-SAN MYSELF!

WAIT A SECOND!

YOU CAN'T DO THAT! WAIT!

THAT'S IT! I'M GOING IN!

SHE CAN'T HIDE IN THERE FOREVER. SHE CAN ANSWER TO US OR ANSWER TO THE POLICE!

THAT'S ENOUGH.

TENYO-SAMA?

I AM THE PERSON IN CHARGE OF THIS GROUP.

PLEASE QUIET DOWN. YOU'RE DISTURBING THE NEIGHBORS.

.....

.....

I WAS THINKING SHE WOULD BE A MUCH OLDER WOMAN.

WOW.

YOU KNOW, I'VE CHANGED MY MIND. I WANT TO GO LIVE WITH HER TOO.

A beautiful leader for a beautiful cult!

"Angel's House" continues to pick up new members!

Who is the mysterious Tenyo-sama?

WELL, REGARDLESS, THEY FINALLY LEFT THE BUILDING THEY WERE IN.

THEY GOT TOO BIG FOR IT. NOW THEY'RE LIVING IN A SMALL VILLAGE IN YAMANASHI.

THEY'VE BUILD A PRETTY LARGE COMPOUND THERE.

LOOKS LIKE THE PRESS IS STILL TAKEN WITH HER. JUST IN A DIFFERENT WAY.

TYPICAL. ONE PRETTY FACE IS ALL IT TAKES TO SWAY PUBLIC SENTIMENT.

THEY'RE DOING THEIR OWN FARMING AND LIVING ENTIRELY OFF THE GRID.

OF COURSE, THE PRESS STILL WON'T LEAVE THEM ALONE. I'M SURE THE PEOPLE IN THE VILLAGE AREN'T HAPPY ABOUT ALL OF THE EXTRA ATTENTION.

BUT EVENTUALLY, THE PRESS IS GOING TO GET TIRED OF THEM AND MOVE ON TO SOMETHING ELSE. THEY ALWAYS DO.

EVERYONE!

IT'S TIME FOR LUNCH!

ALL RIGHT!

YES, MA'AM.

WE HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING WRONG.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

TENYO-SAMA...

THERE'S ANOTHER TV TRUCK PARKED ACROSS THE STREET.

I think he likes living close to such a large group of girls!

I SPOKE WITH A DELIVERY MAN THIS MORNING. HE SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET US MEAT AND FISH PRETTY CHEAPLY.

MY, WHAT WONDERFUL EGGPLANTS. ♡

GROWN COMPLETELY ORGANICALLY. JUST LIKE YOU ASKED!

THAT'S GREAT. WE SHOULD ALSO THINK ABOUT GETTING A COW AND SOME CHICKENS.

THIS IS SO COOL!

THAT WAY WE CAN HAVE FRESH EGGS AND MILK.

WHAT A GREAT WAY TO LIVE.

AND THIS PLACE IS TRULY HEAVEN ON EARTH.

I WAS NOT ONLY ABLE TO GET A HOME, BUT A PLACE AS WELL.

ALL OF THEM AT THE SAME TIME?

THAT'S WEIRD. I WONDER WHERE ALL THE GIRLS ARE. THEY'RE USUALLY WORKING OUTSIDE.

MUST BE ON BREAK.

SILENCE...

HELLO! IS ANYONE HERE?

UH...

EXCUSE ME, WE'RE FROM MHM TELE-VISION.

HEY, YOU THERE! OVER HERE!

WE NEED HELP!

?!

THAT'S WEIRD.

DO YOU THINK THAT THEY MOVED AGAIN?

Is it a group suicide?! Or the worst mass murder in Japan's history?!

Could they have been poisoned?!

All 64 members of the "Angel's House" --DEAD!

IT LOOKS LIKE THEY HAD HEART ATTACKS.

THERE WERE NO PHYSICAL INJURIES AND THE AUTOPSY REPORT FOUND NO CHEMICALS IN THE BODY. THE CAUSE OF DEATH IS STILL UNKNOWN.

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. ALL 64 WOMEN AT THE SAME TIME?!

IT'S A CURSE!!

IT WAS A DEATH NOTE!

COULD IT HAVE BEEN BIOLOGICAL WARFARE?

THAT'S RIDICULOUS! THIS WAS CLEARLY A MAGNETIC WAVELENGTH ATTACK FROM AN ARMY OF SPACE ALIENS

THEY COULD'VE BEEN ALL STRUCK BY LIGHTNING.

NO, THEY WERE PUNISHED BY GOD.

.....

I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED.

...YES, I'M SURE.

DID THAT GIRL DIE AS WELL?

I TOLD YOU THEY WERE ALL NUTS.

ピヨ〜ッ！

MATOUKA?!

THE WOMEN ATE A MATOUKA FRUIT.

SHE SAID BIRDS WERE THEIR SYMBOL.

THESE DEATHS WERE BROUGHT BY KARYOU-BINGA...

...BY WAY OF POISONOUS FRUIT.

THIS ARTICLE WAS PRINTED IN THE NEWSPAPER ON THE DAY THAT THE GIRLS DIED.

IT WAS ALL BUT IGNORED.

KARYOU-BINGA?

THAT'S THE BIRD WITH A HUMAN FACE FROM ALL THOSE BUDDHIST PAINTINGS, ISN'T IT?

…that resulted in chicken meat getting mixed into packages of ground pork.

…due to negligence and health code violations…

The meat packaging facility in Hokkaido has been shut down by county health inspectors…

WHEN THE GIRLS FOUND OUT THEY ATE...THE MEAT OF THEIR-OWN...

...THEY MUST HAVE BEEN OVERWHELMED BY SHOCK AND DESPAIR.

BIRD... MEAT?

YES, THE ONLY MEAT THAT WAS FORBIDDEN IN THEIR RELIGION.

WHETHER YOU BELIEVE IT OR NOT...

...TO AN EXTENT THAT I DON'T BELIEVE WE CAN EVER TRULY FATHOM...

THEN YOU'RE SAYING THAT THE SHOCK OF EATING BIRD MEAT...

...WAS SO BAD THAT THEY ALL SUFFERED HEART ATTACKS?!

W-WAIT A SECOND!

TH-THAT CAN'T BE.

OR IT COULD BE...

...THAT THEY HAD SOMETHING LIKE AN ALLERGIC REACTION?

...THOSE WOMEN FOLLOWED IN THEIR FAITH COMPLETELY.

AND SO THE TENYO WILL TAKE THEM...

...TO JOIN THE OTHER ANGELS.

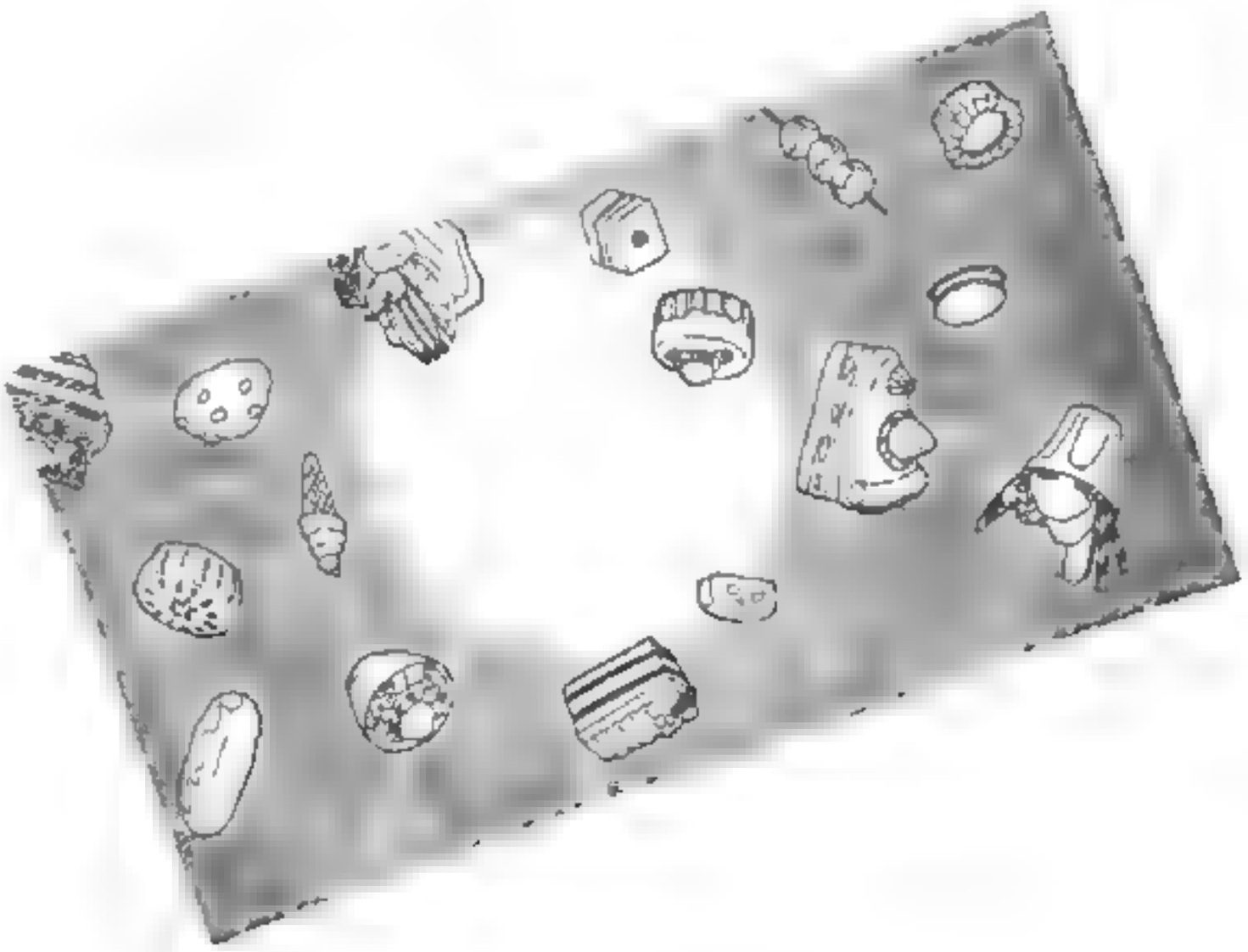
STORY 17 END

WELCOME TO COUNT D'S PET SHOP.

FOR BEING SUCH GENEROUS SUPPORTERS, I HAVE SOMETHING TO SHOW YOU.

IT'S A VERY SPECIAL ROOM THAT CAN ONLY BE OPENED ONCE A YEAR...

第18話／Dispatch



TAKASHI!

TAKASHI! PLEASE ANSWER ME!

MA'AM, IT'S DANGEROUS.

TAKASHI!!!!!

...BUT WE MUST GET YOU TO A HOSPITAL.

WE'LL SEARCH FOR HIM...

NO!

新中華街
寵物店
WELCOME.
OH, IT'S YOU, MARI-SAMA.
LONG TIME NO SEE, COUNT.
I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND, BUT I BROUGHT A FRIEND WITH ME TODAY.

.....

SAYA, THIS IS COUNT D.

...AND IT'S NOT GOOD FOR YOU TO BE ALONE.

GETTING A CUTE LITTLE PET WILL HELP. TRUST ME.

SWEETIE, I'M NOT SAYING THAT ANYTHING CAN REPLACE TAKASHI...

...BUT IT'S BEEN THREE MONTHS SINCE THE ACCIDENT...

OH!

ISN'T HE CUTE?!

AND YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I ADORE HIM!

I GOT SCOOTER FROM THIS PET SHOP A FEW MONTHS AGO.

YES, I UNDER-STAND.

I'LL BE RIGHT OVER.

THE SHIRTS WERE THE WRONG COLOR?!

WHAT?! REALLY?!

EXCUSE ME FOR A MOMENT.

HELLO? YES.

PLEASE LOOK AFTER HER.

COUNT, SAYA IS MY ONE OF MY BEST FRIENDS.

OF COURSE.

I HAVE A LITTLE PROBLEM I NEED TO TAKE CARE OF.

I HAVE TO GO.

NO PROBLEM.

I'M SORRY, SAYA!

THAT'S OKAY. I'M SORRY, BUT I DON'T NEED A PET.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO LOOK AROUND?

ESPECIALLY SINCE...WE DON'T EVEN KNOW IF HE'S DEAD!

THERE'S NO REPLACEMENT FOR TAKASHI.

I'M POSITIVE HE'S STILL OUT THERE SOMEWHERE!

THEY STILL HAVEN'T FOUND A BODY!

I SEE.

WELL, THEN...

WE HAVE A SPECIAL PET AVAILABLE TODAY. IT'S ONLY AVAILABLE ONE DAY A YEAR.

YOU ARE QUITE LUCKY, SAYA.

IF YOU WOULDN'T MIND FOLLOW-ING ME...

TRIAL...?

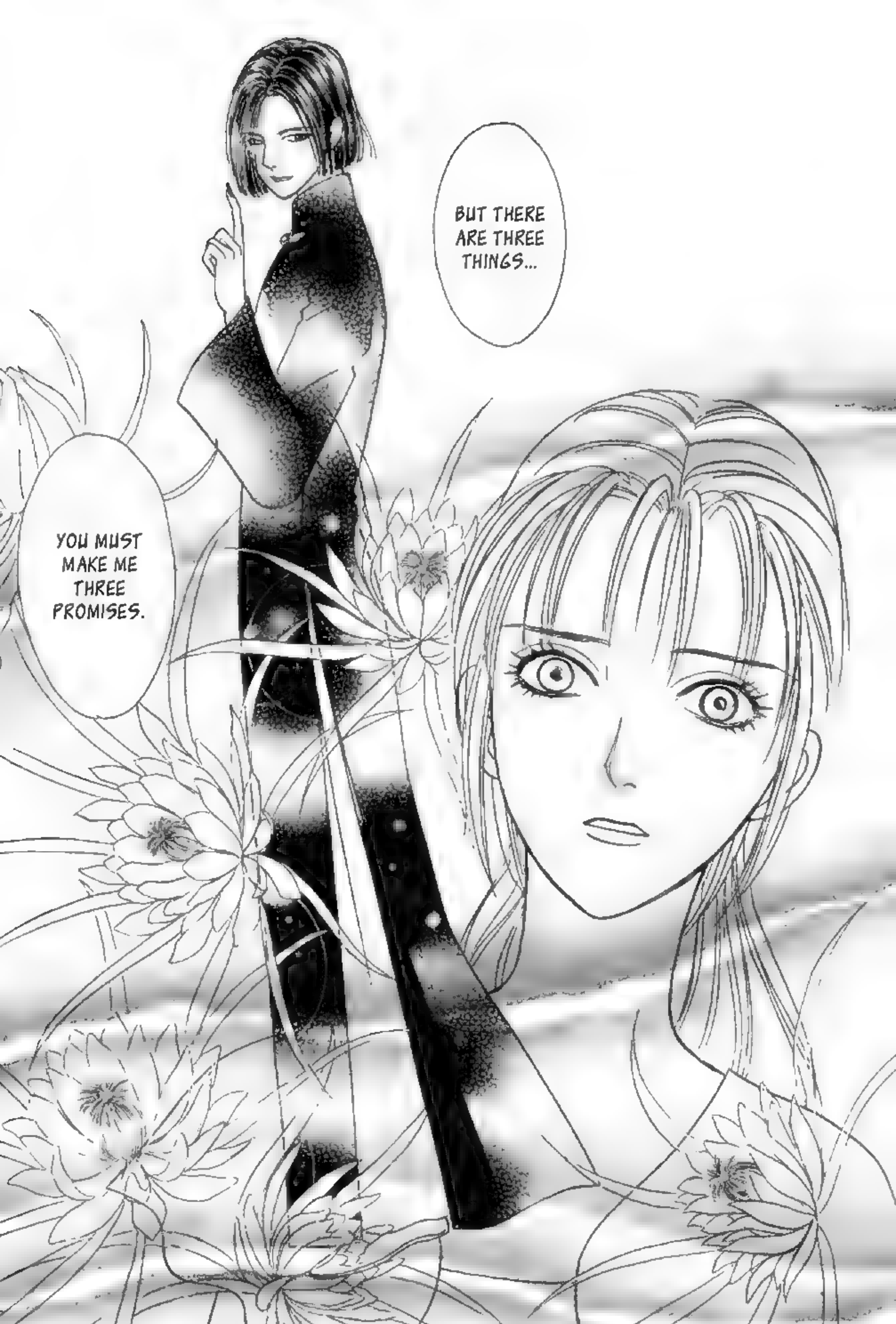
YOU MIS-UNDERSTAND ME. I'M NOT GIVING YOU A PET, I'M LOANING YOU ONE FOR TWO OR THREE DAYS. A TRIAL PERIOD.

OF COURSE.

LIKE I SAID, I DON'T NEED A PET...

AND OF COURSE THERE WILL BE NO CHARGE IF YOU'RE NOT COMPLETELY SATISFIED.

IF YOU DO NOT LIKE HIM, YOU CAN RETURN HIM IMMEDIATELY.


BUT THERE ARE THREE THINGS...
YOU MUST MAKE ME THREE PROMISES.

THE BOX IS SMALL. IS IT A HAMSTER OR MOUSE?

IT BETTER NOT BE SOME NASTY-LOOKING INSECT.

I DIDN'T WANT A PET, BUT YOU SOMEHOW GOT ME TO TAKE ONE HOME.

YOU'RE GOOD, COUNT.

BUT WHAT IS IT?

Tonight, when the moon has risen, turn off all the lights in the room and light this pot.

IT COMES WITH A MANUAL?!

OH...

IT'S JUST AN AROMA CANDLE.

OH...BUT...

SUCH A NICE SMELL...

IT'S RELAXING ME... I... I'M SO TIRED.

IT'S SOOTHING...

IT'S ALREADY THIS LATE?!

OH NO!

HUH...? DID I LEAVE THE WINDOW OPEN?

TAKASHI?!

HELLO, SAYA.

TA...

YOU...

IS THAT REALLY YOU, TAKASHI?

SAYA...

IF YOU DO EXACTLY AS I SAY...

...THIS PET WILL FULFILL YOUR STRONGEST DESIRE.

I'LL PREPARE SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR YOU.

THAT'S RIGHT.

I'M HOME, SAYA.

TAKASHI!!

I'M SORRY I LEFT YOU ALONE FOR SUCH A LONG TIME.

EVERYONE THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD...

I...I NEVER GAVE UP ON YOU.

...BUT I KNEW YOU WERE ALIVE, AND THAT YOU'D BE COMING HOME TO ME! I ALWAYS KNEW!

I DON'T THINK THEY'VE REPLACED YOU YE--

NOT TO MENTION YOUR BOSS!

YOUR PARENTS...

WE MUST TELL EVERY-ONE YOU'VE RETURNED.

THAT'S RIGHT!

YOU CAN DO THAT LATER.

WAIT, SAYA.

TAKASHI ...?

YES... YOU'RE RIGHT.

RIGHT NOW, I'D LIKE FOR THE TWO OF US...TO JUST BE TOGETHER.

TAKASHI...

EVERYTHING IS AS I REMEMBER IT. EVERY FRECKLE, EVERY SCAR...

MY TAKASHI HAS RETURNED TO ME.

AAH...

THESE ARMS...

THIS CHEST...

IF IT'S A DREAM, PLEASE DON'T LET ME WAKE UP.

WAS IT A DREAM, AFTER ALL?

HE'S GONE.

I MADE SOME COFFEE.

PLENTY OF MILK, JUST THE WAY YOU LIKE IT.

MORNING!

カチャ
カチャ

SO IT WASN'T A DREAM?

A DREAM? NO...

OH?!

WHAT'S WRONG?

YOU HAVEN'T EITHER, SAYA.

WELL, ACTUALLY, DID YOU LOSE A LITTLE WEIGHT?

YOUR HAIR LOOKS A LITTLE LONGER, TOO.

YOU'RE NOT INJURED. NOT ONE LITTLE SCRATCH.

YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED ONE BIT SINCE THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU.

MY CLOTHES ARE SHABBY AND THE PLACE IS A COMPLETE MESS!

MY HAIR AND NAILS PROBABLY LOOK AWFUL!

OH, MY...

SINCE THE ACCIDENT, I LET IT ALL GO TO HELL.

I CAN'T REMEMBER THE LAST TIME I TRIMMED EITHER OF THEM.

I'D SPOKEN WITH MARI...

...AND SHE THOUGHT SHE COULD GET ME A JOB BACK AT MY OLD COMPANY.

MY PARENTS GAVE ME SOME MONEY, BUT I'M ALMOST OUT OF IT.

HAVE YOU BEEN WORK-ING?

MONEY-WISE, HOW ARE YOU DOING?

OH...

SPEAK OF THE DEVIL, IT'S MARI.

PE

I HAD LOST MY WILL TO DO ANYTHING...

HELLO?

GOOD MORNING.

EVEN THE KINDNESS OF MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY WASN'T ENOUGH TO BREAK MY MOOD.

...CAN'T EVEN TELL THE DIFFERENT BETWEEN ORANGE AND BLUE. WE NEED YOU BACK, BABE.

WHAT CAN I SAY? THESE KIDS WE HAVE AT THE OFFICE THESE DAYS...

SAYA?

I'M SORRY ABOUT YESTERDAY.

THE SECOND PROMISE...

YOU CANNOT TELL ANYONE ABOUT THIS.

THE COUNT MADE ME PROMISE NOT TO SAY ANYTHING TO ANYONE!

SO, DID YOU GET ANYTHING FROM THE PET SHOP YESTERDAY?

UMM, ACTUALLY, THAT--

AH!

AND RIGHT NOW...

.....

IS IT A DOG? A CAT? OOH! DID YOU GET ONE OF THOSE LIZARDS WITH THE BIG GOOGLY EYES?!

A SECRET?! WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WE DON'T KEEP SECRETS FROM EACH OTHER!

WELL, FOR NOW...IT'S A SECRET.

I'LL CALL YOU AGAIN IN A DAY OR TWO.

SEE YOU.

HEH... WELL, AS LONG AS YOU'RE HAPPY, SAYA. THAT'S ALL I WANTED.

A-ANYWAY, THANK YOU FOR YESTERDAY!

BECAUSE OF YOU, MARI, I FOUND THE BEST PET IMAGINABLE.

WHO ARE YOU CALLING A "PET"?

OH! WELL, I...UH...

Hee!

Hee!

BITE

NO, IT'S OKAY.

I'LL EVEN WEAR A COLLAR IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT.

OWW!

HEY!

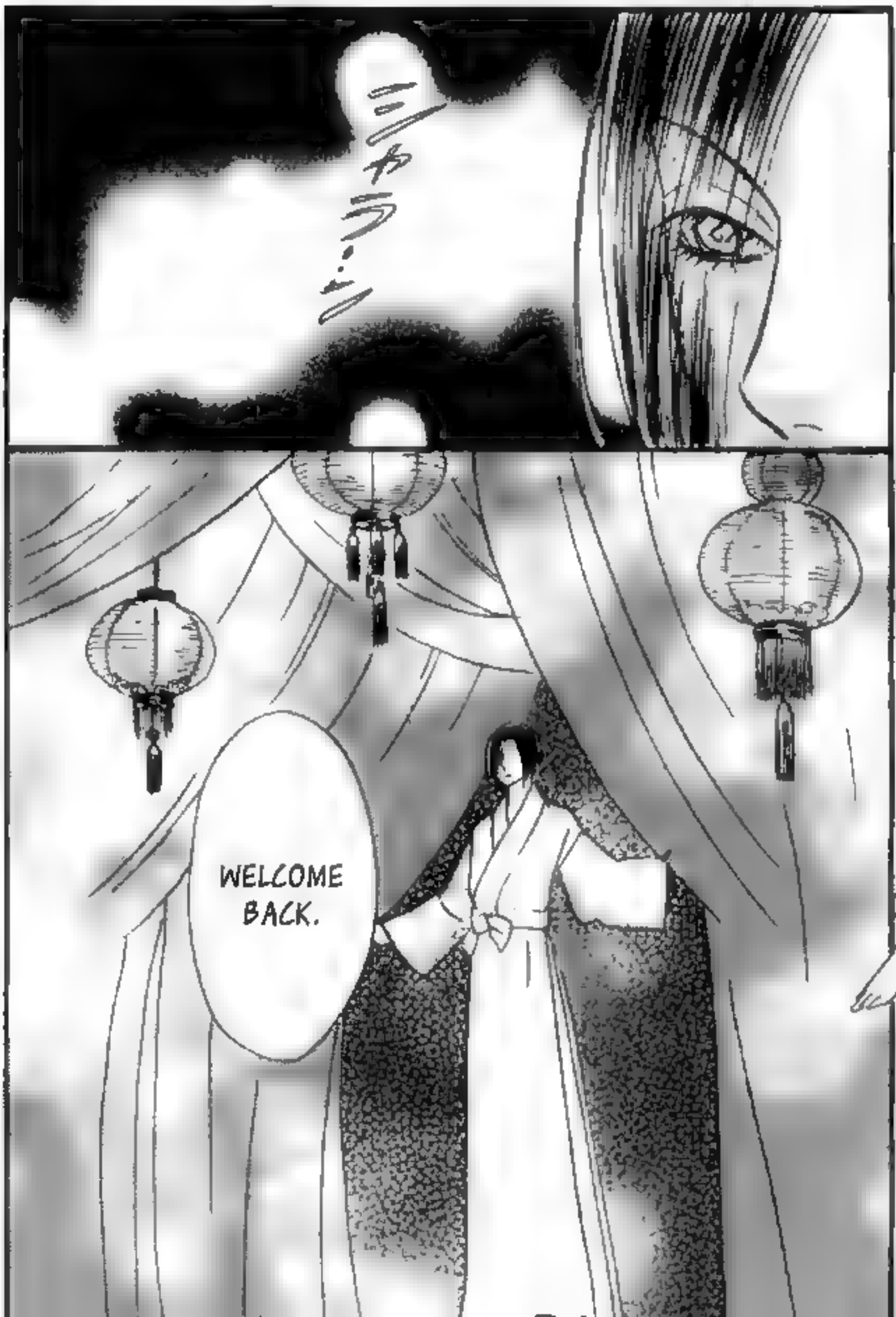
AND WE'LL EAT LOTS OF DELICIOUS THINGS.

STARTING NOW, I'LL PAY ATTENTION TO HOW I LOOK...

...AND I'LL CLEAN UP THE APARTMENT.

IT'LL BE LIKE A SECOND HONEYMOON.

MYWORD


WELCOME BACK.

WELL, THEN...

...I GUESS WE'LL SOON SEE HOW SHE SPENDS HER SHORT MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

COOKED TOGETHER...

...WE NEVER LEFT THE HOUSE.

WE WATCHED TV TOGETHER...

FROM THE MOMENT TAKASHI RETURNED...

AND HELD EACH OTHER EVERY NIGHT.

BEFORE I KNEW IT, THREE DAYS HAD PASSED.

I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW LATE IT IS.

THE DAYS SURE GET DARKER A LOT FASTER IN AUGUST.

I KNOW. THE END OF AUGUST WAS ALWAYS BITTERSWEET SINCE YOU KNEW YOU'D HAVE TO RETURN TO SCHOOL SOON.

WHEN I WAS A KID, IT WAS THE WEEKS BEFORE SUMMER BREAK STARTED THAT ALWAYS MADE ME EXCITED.

I WOULD ALWAYS GET DEPRESSED THE SUNDAY BEFORE SCHOOL STARTED AND WIND UP WITH A STOMACHACHE.

Heh heh!

HA HA HA! HE EXPERIMENTED ON DOGS! SO I'M A PET AFTER ALL!

HA HA...

MY PARENTS ALWAYS ASSUMED I WAS FAKING, BUT MY STOMACH REALLY DID HURT.

Heh heh...

I'D SAY THAT'S MORE THAN NERVES. THAT'S A PAVLOVIAN REFLEX!

rot rot

I HAVE TO GO SOON...

HUH?

I HAVE TO GO BACK NOW.

W-WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? YOUR HOUSE IS RIGHT HERE!!

I WANT TO BE WITH YOU FOREVER, SAYA.

BUT...

OH! YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT YOUR PARENTS. YEAH, WE SHOULD GO SEE THEM.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

NOT BACK TO MY HOUSE.

...?

YOU'LL BE ABLE TO FACE THE WORLD.

?!

YOU'RE OKAY NOW.

STARTING TOMORROW... YOU WON'T BE ALONE.

...YOU WERE ONLY PROMISED THREE DAYS.

TAKASHI?!

HUH?!

...IS ALREADY HERE.

MY RIDE...

WAIT!!

YOU'RE GOING TO LEAVE ME BEHIND AGAIN?!

GOODBYE, SAYA.

WHAT THE--?!

IF YOU'D LIKE, NEXT YEAR...I'LL COME VISIT YOU AGAIN.

WAIT A MINUTE!

WHAT?! NO!

WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON, TAKASHI?!

IS THAT A...FLOATING COW?!

.....

AH!

THIS IS ALL HER DOING, ISN'T IT? IT'S A SCHEME SHE COOKED UP!

OH, I GET IT NOW...

SAYA... THIS IS...

WHY DON'T YOU ANSWER IT?

THAT'S MARI'S RINGTONE! I RECOGNIZE IT!

SAYA?!

IN THE MONTHS SINCE THE ACCIDENT, I WAS WORRYING THAT YOU MIGHT BE DEAD, AND YOU WERE SHACKING UP WITH MARI THE WHOLE TIME!

THAT FREAKY PET SHOP OWNER MUST'VE BEEN IN ON IT!

IS THAT WHAT HAPPENED? FUCKING MARI! GOD, I HATE THAT WOMAN!

...SO YOU AGREED THAT YOU'D RETURN TO ME FOR A FEW DAYS, RIGHT?

YOU KNEW I WAS DEPRESSED, THOUGH...

I KNOW THAT YOU WENT OUT WITH HER BEFORE ME. SHE PROBABLY COULDN'T STAND THAT YOU CHOSE ME OVER HER.

SHE ACTS LIKE MY FRIEND, BUT SHE COULD NEVER STAND IT WHEN I GOT WHAT SHE WANTED.

SHE'S BEEN THAT WAY SINCE HIGH SCHOOL!

OF COURSE, NOW I CAN SEE WHAT REALLY HAPPENED. ALL THOSE LOOKS FROM HER...

OR AT LEAST I THOUGHT YOU HAD.

SAYA...?!

YOU NEVER ENDED THINGS WITH HER! YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN SEEING HER ON THE SIDE!

ALL THOSE CALLS... SHE CALLED US IN THE MIDDLE OF OUR FUCKING HONEYMOON, TAKASHI!

...I GUESS I DIDN'T MAKE A MISTAKE AFTER ALL.

IF YOU'RE GOING TO RETURN TO MARI, THEN...

YOU SON OF A BITCH.

WE CAN'T LIVE TOGETHER. ALL WE CAN HOPE FOR IS TO *DIE* TOGETHER.

I WAS RIGHT.

SAYA...

AOOOOO

AH!

SAYA?!

NO MATTER WHAT...

I WON'T LET YOU TAKE TAKASHI.

THWUK

IF YOU...

...HATE THEM SO MUCH, YOU CAN ALWAYS LEAVE.

BLASTED JAPANESE SUMMERS ARE ALWAYS SO HUMID AND HOT.

IT'S ONE OF THE WORLD'S BIG MYSTERIES.

WHY DO YOU ALWAYS SEEM TO BE WALKING TO THE SAME PLACE I AM?

SHUT IT, D!

FamilyMart

THE HELL? IT'S THIS HOT, BUT THEY'RE MAKING A CAMPFIRE?

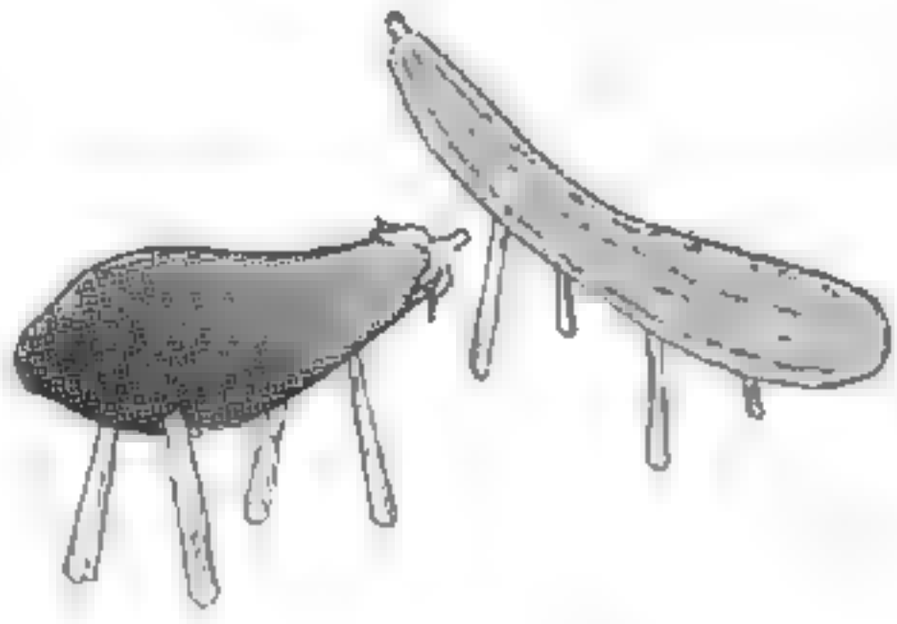
TODAY IS THE LAST DAY OF THE BON HOLIDAY.*

AH, THAT IS A SEND-OFF FIRE.

SNACK

*A holiday where a family's dead ancestors are thought to come and visit

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, TAIZUU, I'VE BEEN SEEING THOSE ALL OVER THE PLACE THESE PAST FEW DAYS.



WHAT'S WITH THE CUCUMBER AND EGGPLANT?

THE CUCUMBER SYMBOLIZES A HORSE, AND THE EGGPLANT SYMBOLIZES A COW.

THAT IS CALLED THE "SPIRIT HORSE."

BON IS THE DAY THAT THE DEAD COME AND VISIT THE HOMES OF THE LIVING.

WHEN THEY COME, THEY ARRIVE AS FAST AS A RUNNING HORSE...

...BUT WHEN THEY DEPART, THEY LEAVE SLOWER THAN A WALKING COW.

THAT IS WHAT THE PEOPLE PRAY FOR.

SAYA...

NOW YOU CAN'T GO BACK.

STAY WITH ME HERE...

...FOREVER.

店物雜

OH, MARI-SAN.

HOW ARE YOU?

HELLO.

...BUT I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO GET A HOLD OF HER SINCE THEN.

SHE WON'T ANSWER HER PHONE AND IT LOOKS LIKE HER APARTMENT IS EMPTY.

SHE SEEMED SO CHEERFUL WHEN I SPOKE TO HER ON THE PHONE THE NEXT DAY...

FINE. HEY, COUNT, WHAT KIND OF PET DID YOU GIVE SAYA A MONTH AGO?

I'M PRETTY WORRIED AS WELL.

YES, IT WAS A TRIAL PERIOD.

LEND?

OUR AGREEMENT WAS THAT I WOULD LEND HER THE PET FOR THREE DAYS, BUT HE STILL HASN'T COME BACK.

THAT DOESN'T SURPRISE ME.

DO YOU MIND IF I COME WITH YOU?

OH.

I THINK I'LL TRY TO STOP BY SAYA'S PLACE AGAIN.

I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO GET A HOLD OF THE TENANT, SO I WAS JUST ABOUT TO LET MYSELF IN.

THE NEIGHBORS HAVE BEEN COMPLAINING ABOUT A STRANGE SMELL COMING FROM THIS APARTMENT.

WHAT HAPPENED?

IT SMELLS LIKE SOME-THING IS ROTTING...

GASP!

I SUPPOSE ...

YEAH, SURE.

CAN I ENTER AS WELL?

MARI SHIROKAWA, THE TENANT, IS ONE OF MY BEST FRIENDS.

NOW, LET'S SEE HERE...

KA-CHAK

BLEGH.

THE SMELL IS... NGH!

UGH!

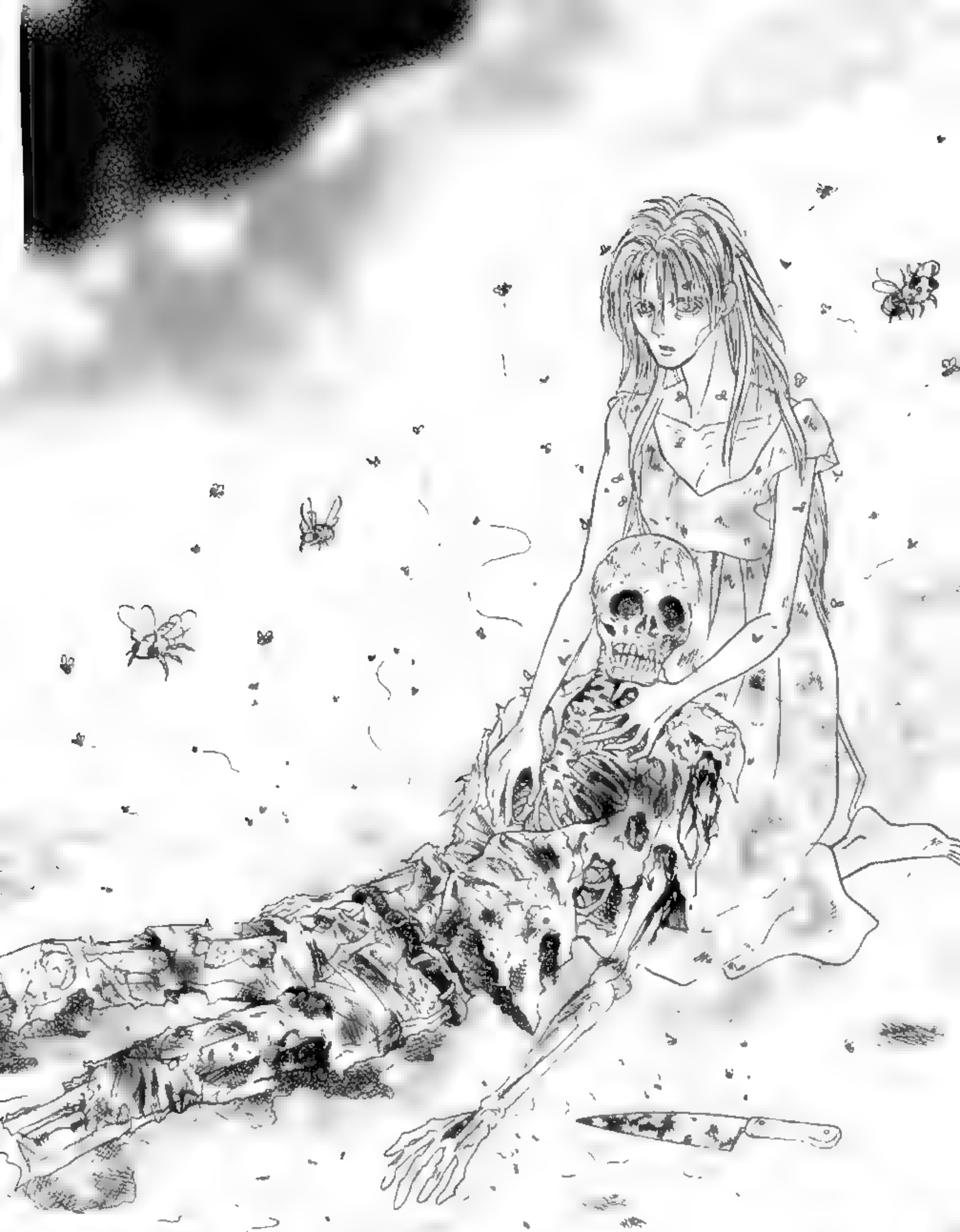
SAYA!

バタ

SAYA?

バタ

Aaaiiieee!



Decomposed corpse found in apartment!

The body of Takashi Shirokawa (26) that went missing four months ago after the car he was in drove off a cliff was recovered yesterday in his former apartment.

His living wife, Saya Shirokawa, was also found with the corpse. Saya-san had no life threatening injuries, but was in an emaciated state.

HMM? WHAT'S THIS?

The police await Saya-san's recovery to question her about how Takashi-san's body wound up in the apartment, and possibly arrest her on suspicion of murder.

CHOP-STICKS AND...

...AN EGGPLANT?

BUT...THEY WERE HONEYMOONING IN BALI DURING THE ACCIDENT! HOW DID SHE GET THE BODY TO JAPAN?

THEN DID HE DROWN IN THE CAR ACCIDENT?

FOUR MONTHS?!

THE AUTOPSY SHOWS THAT HIS TIME OF DEATH WAS FOUR MONTHS AGO.

AND EVEN MORE REMARKABLE, THE DOCTORS HAVE REVEALED THAT SHE'S IN HER FOURTH WEEK OF PREGNANCY.

WE'VE TRIED QUESTIONING SAYA-SAN ABOUT THE INCIDENT, BUT SHE'S MENTALLY UNSTABLE AND HER TESTIMONY IS UNRELIABLE.

BUT WHO'S THE FATHER?

SHE'S PREG-NANT?!

YOU'LL BE ABLE TO FACE THE WORLD.

STARTING TOMORROW... YOU WON'T BE ALONE.

...LET US SEE WHAT KIND OF CHILD WILL BE BORN.

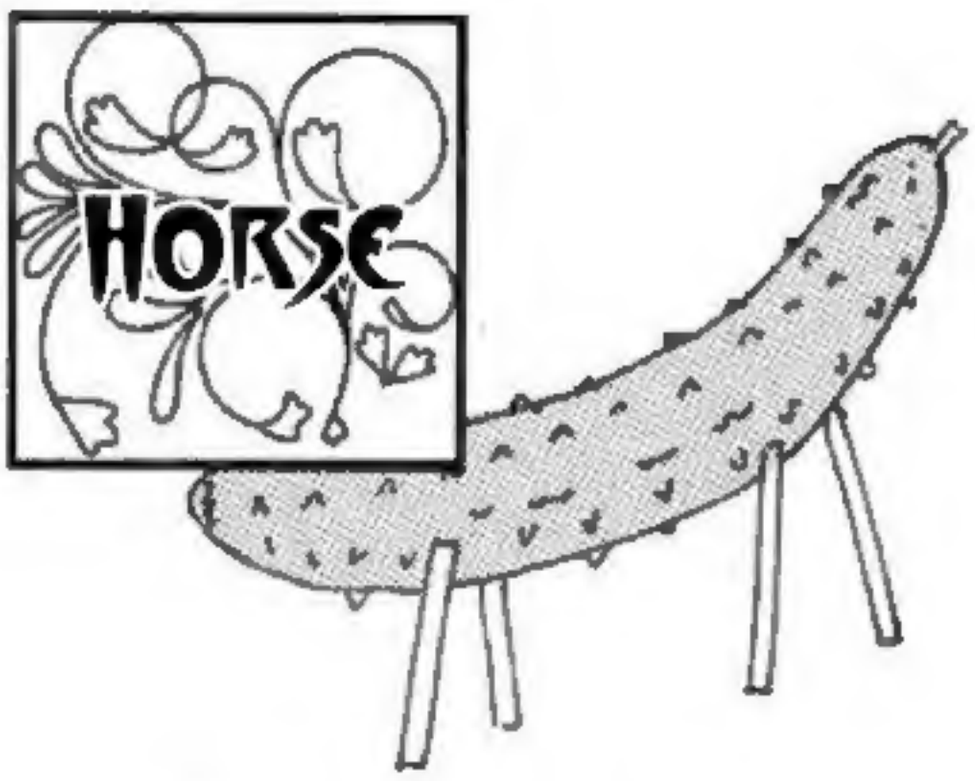
SO, THEN...

STORY 18 END

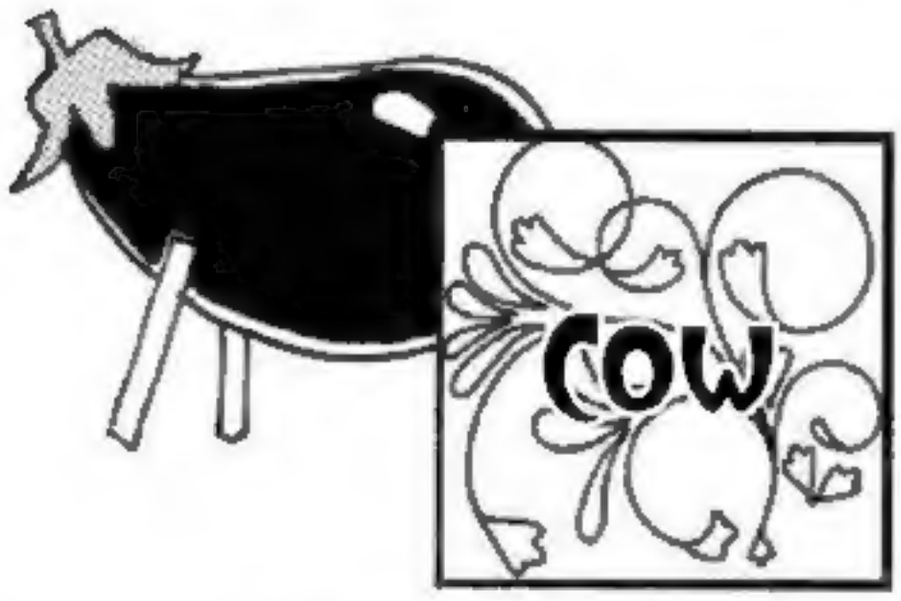
Pet catalog

In the **Bamboo Cutter's Tale,** Princess Kaguya didn't want to marry, so she ordered her suitors to retrieve elaborate objects to win her hand. They were impossible missions. The objects were nonexistent fantasy items like "the begging bowl of Buddha," "the robe of a fire-rat" and "the jewel from a dragon's neck." The seashell of the swallows was one of the items. People have held seashells of this sort during childbirth for luck since ancient times. Why a swallow would be in possession of one is a mystery, but it seems likely that the bird was linked to the shell because of how frequently they reproduce. If they're so successful at childbirth, it's not surprising that their success might be attributed to the shell. Also it's interesting to note that there's a very similar legend to the Japanese tale of Princess Kaguya in China as well. It's called the Emperor's Bamboo Mother, and it also features a heroine born from a bamboo stalk who asks her five suitors to find impossible objects.

The first thing that comes up when speaking of ghost cats is the famous **Nabeshima Bakeneko.** My publisher asked me to make this episode like a ghost story, so I apologize if it feels a bit thrown together. I feel sorry for Taizuu. Oh, when it brightens outdoors before dawn, it's always looked like a lantern of peonies to me.



During the Japanese Bon holiday, our deceased ancestors arrive as fast as possible with a horse, but when they leave, they go as slowly as possible and even take some gifts with them. Is the wish that is contained in the horse and cow made from a cucumber and an eggplant? How all of this connects to the cow's head and horse's head at the gates of hell is unknown.
In China, when they light the send-off fires, they also sometimes burn food, money, or other items. I believe they burn them together as a gift to their ancestors for the other world.



Karyoubinga is a creature that is half human and half bird and existed in ancient India's folklore. It is said that she had a beautiful voice and used it to speak the teachings of Buddha. I believe she appeared in Japan sometime during the 8th century.
There is another prominent figure in Buddhist teachings called Garuda, which has the face of a bird and the body of a man. (And just happens to be a character in my series Genju no Seiza!)
There is also an evil creature called the Gumichou which is a set of conjoined twins with two heads and one body. They take turns sleeping. One day, one of them found a piece of fruit while his brother was asleep. He thought that if he ate the fruit, his sleeping brother would awake with a full stomach, and he ate the fruit alone. However, when the other twin found out about this much later, he was jealous and hated his brother for it. He found a poisonous fruit called a matouka and decided to eat it while his brother was sleeping in much the same way, instantly killing them both. A strange story, I know.

They dance in the high court.

IN OUR NEXT VOLUME...

Count D goes digital? With the popularity of the web, people are now getting pets just to show them off online! Will Count D have the perfect pet for the digital age? And when the widow of a Yakuza boss is being threatened by a vengeful spirit, will Count D be able to solve the case?

All of this and more, in the next enthralling collection of tales from Pet Shop of Horrors: Tokyo volume 6, coming your way in November 2009!